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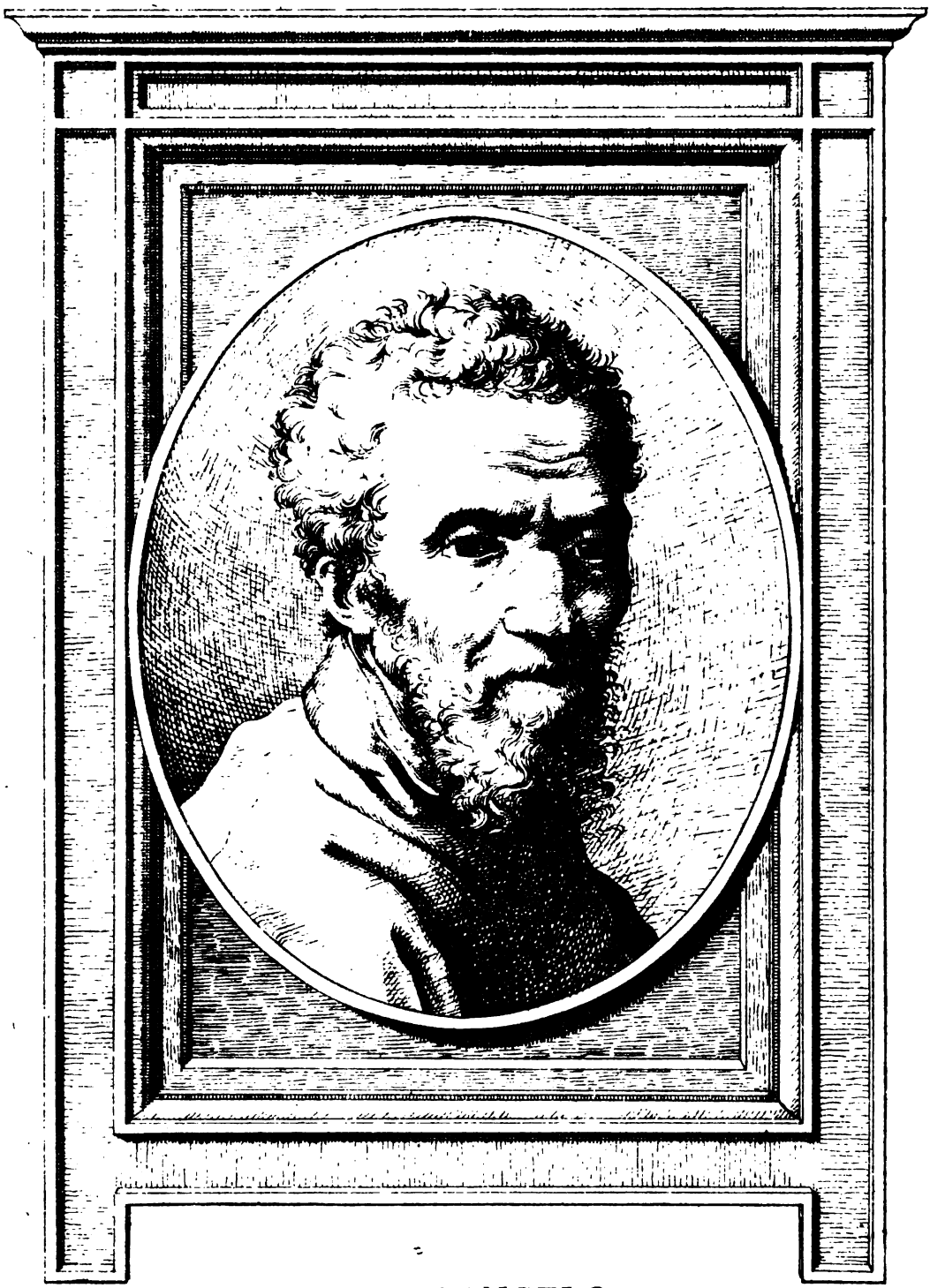

MICHELANGELO

:5.

LIFE AND WORKS

OF

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI

BY

CHARLES HEATH WILSON

THE LIFE PARTLY COMPILED

FROM THAT

BY THE

COMMEND. AURELIO GOTTI

DIRECTOR
OF THE ROYAL GALLERIES
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TOKEN OF RESPECT
AND REGARD

PREFACE

AVALIERE Cosimo Buonarroti the lineal descendant of Buonarroto Buonarroti de' Simoni younger brother of Michelangelo was born on the fifth of November 1790 at Bastia in Corsica. His mother after her husband's death resided at Pisa where her son studied literature and law in the University there.

With a high reputation as a lawyer he filled successively important legal appointments, beginning in 1814 with that of Auditor of the Royal Court of Florence, he was also appointed Censor of the Lyceum and Assistant Secretary of the Legislative Commission.

In 1833 he was promoted to be Auditor of the High Court of the Ruota and nominated President three years afterwards.

When a reform of the judicature was attempted in 1838, he was appointed Vice-President of the Royal Court and a Counsellor in 1840. He sat as Counsellor of the High Court of Cassation for six years, when the Grand Duke, having resolved to give the country institutions in harmony with progress and change of circumstances, created the Council of State of which Buonarroti was made Vice-President.

After the events of 1849 this office was abolished, but he was not forgotten and was elected Counsellor of State in ordinary service, after which he became Minister of Public Instruction in 1852.

He died on the 12th of February 1858 and bequeathed his residence, the house purchased by Michelangelo in the Via Ghibellina, to the City of Florence, with the collection of works of art, manuscripts and memorials of the great Artist which it contains. The Syndic of Florence, the Director of the Royal Galleries and the Librarian of the Laurentian Library for the time being, were constituted Trustees under the Will.

The Cavaliere married Rosina Grant on the fourteenth of February 1846. She was the daughter of Giovanni Vendramini a Venetian gentleman and Lucia Diaz Faria a noble Portuguese lady, and was born in London on the twenty-second of August 1814. She was married first to M^r^ Thomas Grant. After her second marriage she became a worshipper of the memory of Michelangelo. She diligently copied such manuscripts in the family Archives as had suffered from the effects of time, repaired the damages, and in her careful

researches was rewarded by finding in the secret recesses of a cabinet several models by the great artist, amongst which a sketch for his statue of David.

This accomplished lady, after a life of good works and of many charities, died on the 11th of June 1856, bequeathing a capital sum of 20,000 livres, the interest of which was to be applied to the maintenance of the Casa Buonarroti. [1]

As one of the means of celebrating the fourth centenary of the birth of Michelangelo, it was resolved to publish his letters preserved in the Buonarroti Archives, the arrangement and editing of these being confided to the Cav. Gaetano Milanesi, whose profound knowledge of ancient records so pre-eminently fitted him for the task. A Bibliography relating to Michelangelo prepared by Count Luigi Passerini, the distinguished Librarian of the National Library, was also to be published at the same time. Besides these important and interesting works, the Commendatore Aurelio Gotti who holds the high office of Director of the Royal Galleries and Museums of Florence undertook a new Life of Michelangelo to be illustrated by unpublished documents contained in the Buonarroti Archives as well as by others already known.

The present Life of Michelangelo was undertaken with the wish to present the inedited documents translated into Eng-

[1] Cosimo Buonarroti was not without heirs for descendants of Buonarroto Buonarroti are still living, but had he not thus disposed of his property, it would have been dispersed after his death, with no reverence for the memory of Michelangelo, and no object but to make money to be wasted. By his Testament, Cosimo Buonarroti preserved the Casa Buonarroti and its contents from this fate.

lish, and the Commendatore Gotti, with rare liberality and generosity, freely communicated to me those selected for his own important «Life of Michelangelo,» on which he was then engaged.

It was my first intention to make a translation of the Commendatore Gotti's book, but I found myself unable to circumscribe my account of the works of Michelangelo within the limits drawn by Giorgio Vasari and Ascanio Condivi. I had for many years wished to write a technical notice of the frescos of the Sixtine Chapel, had made some notes with this object in 1842 and had then become aware that without a scaffold it would be impossible to make accurate observations. I explained my ideas to my friend who without hesitation permitted me to retain the valuable documents which he had lent me, and without which no account of the works of Michelangelo can be complete. The value of this concession may be more obvious, when it is considered that if access had been granted to the original documents, previously invariably refused, more than a years labour would have been necessary to make copies similar to those placed so freely in my hands. I therefore, take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to the Commendatore Aurelio Gotti for his courtesy and kindness.

Before attempting to write an account of the frescos of the Sixtine Chapel, knowing it to be impossible to examine them accurately without a scaffold, I wrote to Sir William Stirling Maxwell to M^r^ William Thomas Thomson and M^r^ James Hay upon the subject. They took a warm interest in my plan

and in a short time a favourable opportunity was afforded me of carrying it out.

By the influential introduction of M^r^ Robert Monteith of Carstairs to His Excellency Monsignore, now Cardinal Pacca, Chamberlain to His Holiness the Pope, facilities were granted, with a liberality and kindly courtesy, of which I would express my grateful appreciation. A moveable scaffold fifty-four feet in height was erected, and a rare opportunity afforded of examining the magnificent and altogether unequalled frescos of the vault. The Last Judgment on the west wall was also inspected, but not so closely, because the altar steps prevented the near approach of the wooden tower.

Whatever may have been the treatment of the frescos in past and less enlightened times, which I have felt it to be my duty to describe without reserve, it is evident from the numerous and noble works of restoration carried on in the reign of Pius IX, that the Sixtine Chapel would not have been uncared for had circumstances permitted.

I must further record my sense of obligation to the Count Passerini,[1] to the Cavaliere Gaetano Milanesi, to the Cavaliere Giorgio Campani Inspector of the Royal Museum and Galleries in Florence whose unwearied kindness is gratefully appreciated by so many of my countrymen, and also to the Cavaliere Carlo Pini for his assistance.

[1] The notice of the late Cavaliere Cosimo Buonarroti in this introduction has been taken almost verbatim from Count Passerini's history of the Buonarroti in the appendix to Signor Gotti's work.

To my friend M^r^ James Jackson Jarves whose knowledge of art is so well known and appreciated, I have been indebted for invaluable advice and encouragement. I have also to thank another friend M^r^ W. Mondeford Bramston who accompanied me to Rome and kindly aided me in my daily visits to the Sixtine and ascent of the tall and tremulous scaffold, from the summit of which we made our observations.

The drawings for the illustrations have been executed by Signor Filippo Leonardi and reproduced by Signori Pietro Smorti and Company. The printing has been conducted at the establishment of the Gazzetta d'Italia under the care of the Cavaliere Landi. The workmen employed being all Italians without any knowledge of the English Language, a fact which might have excused a larger list of errata than that appended to these pages.

The wood-cuts have been engraved from my own designs by Professor Ratti of Bologna and Signor Cipriani of Florence.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

ILLUSTRATIONS

ERRATA.

Page	Line				
11	13	*For*	"usally"	*read*	"usually"
53	9	*For*	"councillors"	*read*	"counsellors"
88	25	*For*	"hauds"	*read*	"hands"
141	27	*For*	"points"	*read*	"joints"
142	19	*For*	"exsisted"	*read*	"existed"
169	29	*For*	"painting"	*read*	"pointing"
172	29	*For*	"He"	*read*	"he"
194	19	*For*	"notorius"	*read*	"notorious"
199	5	*For*	"unpleaseant"	*read*	"unpleasant"
213	4	*For*	"St. Lawrence"	*read*	"San Lorenzo"
232	14	*For*	"saddller"	*read*	"saddler"
418	1	*For*	"preeminently"	*read*	"pre-eminently"
549	27	*For*	"twenty-third"	*read*	"eighteenth"
			NOTE.		
364	10		Erase "semicolon" after		"farthing"

Florence. Reference will be made only to those in which the Heraldic bearings are interesting.

CHAPTER I

FRIEZE at the head of the chapter. The Florentine lily with the ancient arms of the Buonarroti and the Counts of Canossa.

MASK OF A FAUN executed in white marble by Michelangelo in 1489 when a boy of fourteen. (National Museum Florence) .. to face 14

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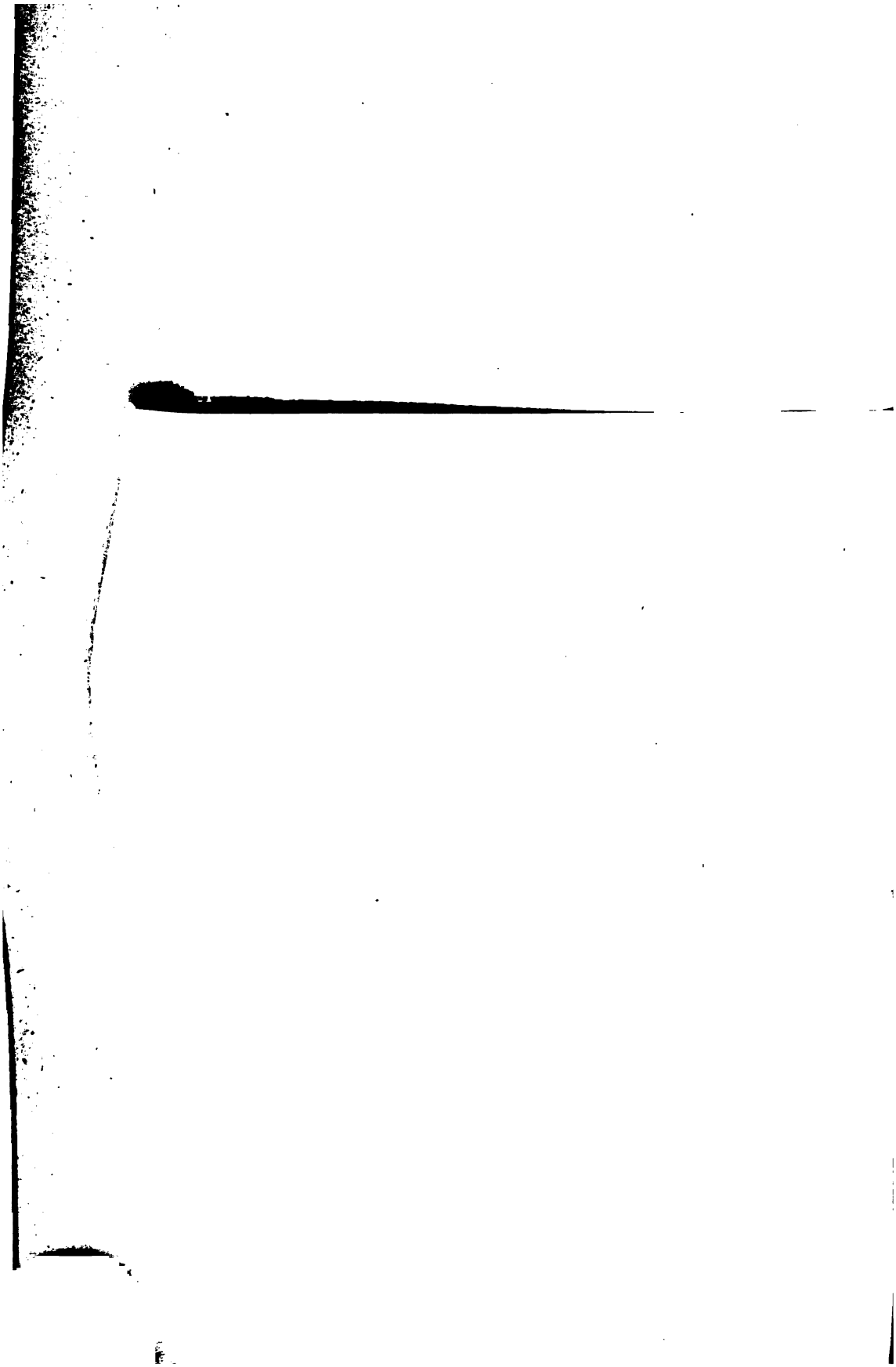

ILLUSTRATIONS

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PORTRAIT OF MICHELANGELO from an unpublished pen-drawing attributed to Giorgio Vasari and attached to the frontispiece designed and drawn by him for his collection of sketches by the great Masters. (Florence Gallery).

Copied from the original by Signor Filippo Leonardi. All the drawings with one or two exceptions have been prepared by this accomplished draughtsman ..... to face the Title

FRONTISPIECE designed by Giorgio Vasari. Inclosing the dedication. (Florence Gallery)..... to follow the Title

PREFACE. Frieze with portrait of Michelangelo.

INITIAL letter with arms of the Buonarroti Counts Palatine.

The Friezes and ornaments at the ends of the chapters have all been designed and drawn by the author and engraved by the Signori Ratti of Bologna and Cipriani of Florence. Reference will be made only to those in which the Heraldic bearings are interesting.

CHAPTER I

FRIEZE at the head of the chapter. The Florentine lily with the ancient arms of the Buonarroti and the Counts of Canossa.

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Madonna and Child with figures, bas-relief executed during Michelangelo's residence with Lorenzo de'Medici. (Casa Buonarroti) to face 18

St John Baptist. A statue in white marble rather under life size. There is much division of opinion regarding the originality of this beautiful statue, but sculptors of reputation have declared themselves in favour of its being a work of Michelangelo. In general beauty of form and in sentiment it is superior to the productions of contemporary sculptors, and when a cast of it was exhibited in Florence beside other casts from statues by Michelangelo it did not fail in the comparison. It is marked by peculiarities of chiselling observable in Michelangelo's work especially in the feet, and the short fourth toe, so common in feet by him, is there. Other parts are less like his workmanship, but it may have been touched by another hand. Since these pages were written an opinion unfavourable to the authenticity of the statue has been pronounced by the Florentine Academicians ..... to face 25

The woodcut at the end of the chapter. The arms of Caprese.

Chapter II

The head of the statue of David contrasted with that of the statue of St George by Donatello. That Michelangelo was influenced by the art of Donatello is manifest. No doubt partly from his training by Bertoldo an able pupil of Donatello and partly by his just appreciation of the great sculptor's works. The statue of David has been removed from its site in front of the Municipal Palace. If by this, old associations are broken, on the other hand it is saved from injury by the weather and it is infinitely better seen in its new tribune than where it originally stood ..... to face 52

Unfinished picture of the Madonna and infant Jesus with other figures. Reproduced from a French etching. (National Gallery, London) ..... to face 66

Chapter IV

Frieze. Ornament of oak branches the device of the Della Rovere.

Portion of the design by Michelangelo for the Monument of Julius II. (Florence Gallery) ..... to face 74

Chapter VI

Page

Frieze. The candelabrum held by the angel by Michelangelo on the altar of San Domenico at Bologna. Ornament by his own hand.

The recumbent figure of Adam in the fresco of the creation of Man. This magnificent figure the stature of which is about ten feet, was most probably painted in three days. The dotted lines show the joinings in the plaster. In the text four days work are admitted to be possible. From Michelangelo's system of retouching with distemper colour and from the great care with which the frescos are executed it is difficult to trace the joinings. A careful examination of the photographs by M. Braun with magnifiying power induces the author to think that only three days were expended on this figure. If on still closer examination of the fresco itself it should be found that this must be extended to four, still it will remain a marvel of rapid execution. The head occupied one day, the body and right arm certainly not more than one, the only doubt is whether the left arm was included or not in this second day. If not, then as stated in the text, Michelangelo painted this figure in four days. The outline was first pounced on the plaster by the help of the cartoon, then it was marked with a sharp point on the wet plaster, the markings are carefully indicated in the illustration by finely dotted lines.

The lines hatched across show the sweeps of a brush or sponge with which the fresco has been washed at one time and the distemper colour swept away or streaked ..... to face 140

At the end of the chapter the skull of a Ram, a favourite ornament of Michelangelo.

Chapter VII

Frieze. The oak leaves of Sixtus IV founder of the Sixtine Chapel.

Ornament at the end of the chapter of oak leaves, the badge of the Della Rovere.

Chapter VIII

Figure of a young man, one of the garland bearers painted in fresco on the cornice of the Sixtine Chapel. The dotted lines show the joinings in the plaster which indicate each days work;

Page

Ornament at the end of the chapter. The inscription placed by the Florentines over the door of the Municipal Palace.

CHAPTER XV

FRIEZE. The restoration of the Medici.

CHAPTER XVI

The head of Giuliano de' Medici and that of the Adonis to show the identity of the type. This plate may be compared with that representing the heads of David and of St George, page 52. Besides showing the entirely ideal character of the figures of the Medici on their monuments, it may be observed that the type of head frequently repeated by Michelangelo is one in which he was anticipated by Donatello ..... to face 390

CHAPTER XVII

DIAGRAM. (Fig. 1). This outline shows the time occupied in painting the two figures described in the text. The dotted lines show the joinings. The head of the Angel and of the soul including the arms and hands and a piece of background occupied one day. The body and legs of the soul a second day. The stature of the soul must be seven feet. Throughout the fresco of the Last Judgment, so far as it was possible to examine it closely this diagram denotes Michelangelo's rate of painting. Nothing can exceed the finish of the work. There is not a trace of the use of the stylus. (Fig. 2). The leg of Adam showing the part broken out. (Fig. 3). Leg of an ascending figure much retouched, the retouches have become black. From sketches by the author .... to face 432

CHAPTER XVIII

FRIEZE. The ornament adapted from that on friezes in the court of the Farnese Palace.

CHAPTER XIX

FRIEZE. The shield of arms of Paul III.

At the end of the chapter the arms of Pontifical Rome.

CHAPTER XX

FRIEZE. Portrait of Michelangelo in his old age.

St Peters in progress. From a slight sketch executed with a pen in bistre, preserved in the Florence Gallery. The sketch conveys

Page

no just idea of the size of the building, but it is notwithstanding very interesting, it shows the simple nature of the machinery in use, and apparently part of an older erection still stood under the drum of the dome in progress, whilst there is at this date no appearance of the apse, sketched by the author ..... to face 514

Chapter XXI

Frieze. The shield of arms of Michelangelo Buonarroti.

Elevation of the model made under the direction of Michelangelo for the Cupola of St Peter's.

By an unfortunate error the scale is erroneously stated. The print is a diminished reproduction of that executed for the work of signor Aurelio Gotti, and the dimensions of the original scale have been reproduced whilst not applicable ..... to face 530

Section of the model made under the direction of Michelangelo for the Cupola of St Peter's ..... to face 533

At the end of the chapter in three shields grouped together, the arms of Florence of Caprese and of Michelangelo Buonarroti.

APPENDIX

The bodies of Dukes Lorenzo and Alessandro as seen when the sarcophagus was opened. First March 1875, sketched by the author 564

LIFE OF MICHELANGELO

Chapter I

MICHELANGELO was born at Caprese on the sixth of March 1475. His father Ludovico son of Leonardo Buonarroti Simoni was at the time of his birth Podestà or chief magistrate of the adjoining towns of Caprese and Chiusi in the Casentino, and his mother was Francesca daughter of Neri di Miniato del Sera and Bonda Rucellai.

It was the custom of Ludovico to register family events, and he made the following memorandum of the birth of his second son.

« I record that on this day the 6th of March 1474 [1] a son was born to me: I gave him the name of Michelagnolo and he was born on monday morning before 4 or 5 o' clock, and he was born when I was Podestà of Caprese, and he was born in Caprese (the Godfathers were those below named.) He was baptized on the 8th day of the same month in the church of San Giovanni of Caprese. These are the Godfathers.

[1] By the Florentine computation ab incarnatione. By the present ab nativitate 1475.

Don Daniello di ser Buonaguida of Florence, Rector of San Giovanni of Caprese;

Don Andrea di.... of Poppi Rector of the Abbey of Diariano (Dicciano);

Giovanni di Nanni of Caprese;

Iacopo di Francesco of Casurio (?);

Marco di Giorgio of Caprese;

Andrea di Biaggio of Caprese;

Francesco di Iacopo of the Arduino (?) of Caprese;

Ser Bartolomeo di Santi of the Lanse (?) notary. »[1]

Upon the termination of his period of office,[2] shortly after the birth of this second son, Ludovico returned with his family to Florence, and the babe was given to nurse to a woman of Settignano, a village on the slope of the hills, which rise to the north east of the city, and not far from which, surrounded by vines and olives, stands the villa which then belonged to the Buonarroti.

The family of Michelangelo was noble but poor, and before his birth, had fallen into obscurity; but the time came when it was admitted, that by the brilliancy of his genius and reputation he conferred lustre on noble relatives rather than received honour from them. It was probably with his approbation that his pupil and biographer Condivi asserted his descent from the Counts of Canossa, a statement now discredited. The following letter written to Michelangelo in the year 1520 shows the grounds of his belief. It was a reply to a letter of introduction to the Count Alexander Canossa in favour of Giovanni of Reggio painter.

« Honoured Relative. I have been gratified by a visit in

[1] The Buonarroti Archives Florence. This record was sent to Michelangelo when in Rome on the 16th of April 1548 by his nephew Leonardo. The copy in the Buonarroti archives was made from the memorandum book of Ludovico.

[2] Six months.

your name of Zoanne of Reggio painter, which has been very agreeable to me: but it would have been dearer to me had I seen you in person, and had you come to make the acquaintance of the members of your house: and had I known when you arrived in Carrara, I should have been there to oblige you to come here to know us, and to enjoy some days with us. I offer you on my own part, as well as on that of my brother Count Albert, in all time coming, what we have: and whenever we can do anything for you, we shall always be prepared to do you pleasure: and we trust that you will make use of us and our possessions. It may gratify you to come sometimes to know your relatives: and as nothing further occurs to me at present, I recommend myself to your kind thoughts. Although I feel that it is needless to do so, I recommend to you Zoanne, the bearer of this.

« At Bianello of the Four Castles the VIII day of october MDXX.

« Seeking in my ancient records, I have found one Messer Simone of Canossa, who was Podestà of Florence, as I have explained to the above mentioned Zoanne.

« Your good relative

« ALEXANDER Count of CANOSSA. »[1]

Michelangelo attached much importance to this courteous and friendly letter, which confirmed his family tradition, that through this Simone, whose name was added to that of Buonarroti, was established the relationship with the noble line of Canossa. At a later period he wrote to Lionardo di Buonarroti. « In the Book of contracts there is a letter of the Count Alexander of Canossa, whom I found at home this day, who came to visit me in Rome as a relative. Be careful of it. »[2] In perfect

[1] Buonarroti Archives, Casa Buonarroti Florence.
[2] Buonarroti Archives.

good faith Michelangelo believed in this relationship, and adopted, as his crest of arms, the dog rampant gnawing a bone, which is the cognizance of the Canossa. The following is the tradition in which Michelangelo believed, which Vasari and Benedetto Varchi have repeated, and which, although entirely fabulous was for long credited. It was asserted that Messer Rolandino Count of Canossa was Captain of the people of Florence in 1283, that so greatly was he pleased with his sojourn in that city that when advanced in life, he established himself in it permanently, and his son Messer Simone was the progenitor and gave his name to the family, made so famous by Michelangelo. This tradition fell to the ground, when it was established, that this Simone lived and sat in the Council of the Commune in 1284, one year only after the Captainship of Messer Rolandino, and that in the document which has preserved his name, he is called the son of Buonarrota. It is needless to repeat the genealogy, which Michelangelo Buonarroti the younger endeavoured to establish upon such vague traditions, but turning to safer ground, the descent of the Buonarroti is verified by a parchment of 1222, which in the time of the second Michelangelo existed amongst his domestic archives.

By this document Berlinghieri of San Florenzio, son of the defunct Bernardo, together with Buonromano and Buonarrota his sons, with the consent of Bellantedesca his spouse, and Buonastella di Borgognone his daughter in law, and wife of Buonromano, sold to Buonarrota, a house in the quarter of San Simone: the instrument being prepared by Ser Rustichello di Buoninsegna. From Berlinghieri without doubt descended the family of Buonarroti. His family was noted for at least a century earlier, but there do not exist documents to establish his descent from father to son.

Berlinghieri was the son of Bernardo who died in 1228. His

wife was the above mentioned Bellantedesca, his son was Buonarrota, from whom comes the family name, and the son of Buonarrota was Simone, whose name also was preserved as a family surname. With the Counts of Canossa there was no relationship whatever. The father of Michelangelo, Ludovico di Leonardo Buonarroti Simone, was born on the eleventh of June 1444. He passed his life in poverty, till provided for by the devotion and care of his immortal son. In 1473 he was one of the twelve Buonomini; and on the thirtieth of September 1474 he was sent for six months, as Podestà or chief magistrate, to Caprese, and there, as has been related and recorded by himself, his son Michelangelo was born. [1]

Ludovico placed his son, so soon as he was old enough, in a grammar school kept by Francesco da Urbino, where he made some progress in elementary knowledge. But he showed the real bent of his mind by devoting all the time not spent at the school desk to drawing, in which he delighted, and young as he was, he sought the acquaintance of artists, and took every opportunity of associating and conversing with them. Ludovico was greatly dissatisfied, for he did not wish to have an artist in the house, and made every effort to turn his son from his predilection, which however he found invincible. He has been somewhat severely judged, yet it could hardly be expected that he should discern between the irresistible promptings of inborn genius and a child's whim, and he naturally thought it best to bring up his sons to the profitable occupations connected with the silk and woollen manufactures of Florence.

It is related both by Condivi and Vasari, that Michelangelo's father and uncles even had recourse to blows to turn him from his favourite study. This violence however proved use-

[1] Genealogy and history of the family of Buonarroti by the Count Louis Passerini, Librarian of the National Library Florence.

less, the boy's firm disposition resisted successfully, and he persevered, so that finally his father listening to the advice of better judging friends, resolved to second his inclinations. In justice to him, it may be remembered that he did what was wisest, by placing the young Michelangelo in the workshop of Domenico and David Ghirlandaio, [1] the best school of art then in Florence. Ludovico, as was his wont, made a memorandum of his sons apprenticeship. [2]

« First April 1488. I, Ludovico di Leonardo di Buonarrota place Michelagnolo my son with Domenico and Davit sons of Tommaso Currado for the three following years, with these agreements: that the said Michelagnolo shall remain with the above for the said time, to learn to paint and to exercise himself therein, and to do what the above may desire, and that the said Domenico and Davit are bound to pay him, during these three years twenty-four florins as per agreement: the first year six florins: the second year eight florins: and the third year ten florins: together the sum of ninety-six livres. » Below this contract there is also written, on the same paper, by the hand of Ludovico. « Received by the above Michelagnolo, this day sixteenth April, two golden florins, which I, Ludovico di Leonardo his father had to his account. Livres 12,12. » [3]

By this contract it is apparent, that although so young, Michelangelo must have made some progress in drawing, so as to be useful to his Masters, which is shewn by the unusual circumstance of a payment being made to him in the first year of his apprenticeship. Before entering the school of the Ghirlandaii, he had become intimate with Francesco Granacci, who

[1] Domenico and David Currado commonly called Ghirlandaio.

[2] Vasari, Lives of the most famous Painters Sculptors and Architects. Florence, Edited by Gaetano Milanesi and Carlo Pini, V. XII, p. 160.

[3] The salary paid to Michelangelo would amount in English money to L. 11. 10 Stg. divided into three annual payments.

although younger than himself, being ten years old, was a pupil in the same school. They became such friends, a friendship which lasted through life, that Granacci lent him drawings by Domenico to copy.

The early age at which the study of art was frequently commenced in those days, is as remarkable as the excellent work which youthful artists produced under the guidance of their masters. It may be mentioned as an example, that Pierino del Vaga, who painted the old Testament subjects in the Loggia of the Vatican, known as Raffael's Bible, was only sixteen when he executed them in fresco from his Masters sketches. Many instances of similar skill in very young artists might be given.

The youthful Michelangelo made good use of his opportunities, and it is related by Vasari, that he drew upon whatever surface would retain the marks of the charcoal which he employed as a pencil. The white washed walls of the court or terraces of his father's villa were covered with his designs. One of these specified by Vasari and ascribed to his boyhood still exists, on the wall at the top of a staircase, leading to the kitchen and upper terrace of the villa. It is called a Satyr, and is drawn with charcoal evidently by Michelangelo, but when his powers were matured. The head is now but a shadow of what it has been, but still its lifelike expression is wonderful, the body is only slightly marked in, and part of it is effaced by the falling of the plaster, yet what remains shows a master's touch; the right arm and hand are vigorously drawn, the arm raised and bent at the elbow, the hand grasping what was probably intended to represent a leather bottle from which the Satyr was drinking, by pouring the liquid down his throat, a method often represented in ancient works of art or decoration and still common in Italy. As it is impossible that this powerfully drawn and lifelike figure could be the work of a

boy, it may be supposed, that in one of his frequent visits to his father's villa, his eye was caught by his youthful performance, and pleased with its spirit, he passed over it anew with charcoal, and this has led to its preservation. It has frequently been retouched since, not with charcoal only, but with a brush and water colour also; but enough remains to recall the power of Michelangelo.[1] As a matter of course other objects in the villa are attributed to him, notably two chimney-pieces, one of a later time and the other of no intrinsic merit.

A variety of anecdotes are related of the rapid progress made by the youthful Michelangelo in the school of the Curradi. His subsequent works, in that which they retain of the influence of Domenico, bear testimony to his progress and observation. They are told however, as if he acted an independent part and not that of a pupil paid for his services. If instead of such mere Studio gossip, some account had been preserved of the real nature of his training, it would have been as interesting as instructive. In all probability he went through the usual and useful routine of Studio-work, and laid the foundation of the skill, which at intervals of his career he showed in painting; that he soon excelled his fellow-students may be fully credited, and that he excited his Master's jealousy may be true, although it is a painful episode in the life of an eminent artist.

The frescos of the choir of Sta Maria Novella by Ghirlandaio were in progress during Michelangelo's first year of work and study. He therefore witnessed all the processes of fresco-painting, the preparation of the lime, the laying of the different coats of plaster, the execution and use of cartoons or work-

[1] Folding shutters now protect it, and it is exhibited with reverence by the inhabitants of the villa. It was shown to me by the Signora Bandinelli wife of the lineal descendant of the Sculptor Bandinelli who thought himself able to rival Michelangelo.

ing-drawings, and the method of drawing and painting on the freshly applied plaster. Being an acute and zealous observer, probably nothing was lost upon him, and this supposition is strengthened by the fact, that he made a careful study of the scaffold, with the artists at work on it, surrounded by their materials. This is a remarkable example in one so young of thoughtfulness and judicious observation, which, no doubt, proved very useful to him, especially when at a subsequent period he showed so much readiness and skill in designing the scaffolding for painting the vault of the Sixtine Chapel. He would certainly be required to grind colours like other students, was initiated no doubt in the art of enlarging and drawing cartoons from his Master's sketches, which is usally pupil's work, and admirable practice besides, and it may be supposed that he was employed in painting decorative portions of the frescos, which also was the duty and work of assistants.

Vasari relates as a proof of his genius, that he corrected the outline of one of his Master's sketches. This if known to Domenico might justly have excited his anger, but he may have known nothing about it. Vasari treasured the drawing but probably it was in the first place, a slight sketch lying about amongst the waste papers of the Studio, picked up and passed over by the ready hand of the rapidly progressing pupil. It cannot be supposed, that he would have shown the bad taste involved in touching any important work of his Master's. It appears from Vasari's account that in after life he showed this drawing to Michelangelo, who was struck by it and praised it.

It is probable, that in his eager desire to make progress, the youthful Michelangelo worked after studio hours. His first picture, the subject of which was taken from a print of Schongauer representing a temptation of St Anthony, may thus be accounted for, as Ghirlandaio could hardly have recommended

such a study, neither would he have permitted him to execute it, whilst engaged in his service. The chief point of value in the story is its testimony to that study and observation of nature at so early a period, which was characteristic of Michelangelo throughout his whole career and which enabled him to excel contemporaries. Nature was still imperfectly observed and studied in the time of his youth. Costumed figures were represented with a naïveté and truth to nature peculiar to the best masters of the close of the fifteenth century, but the nude was defectively delineated, and a traditional method still survived. Michelangelo escaped from this at a very early period, and therefore the story of his observation of nature has a special interest. The picture which he painted, it is said, excited admiration as the work of one so young.

It is also recorded that he manifested so much skill in the imitation of old drawings, that when he stained the paper and gave them other appearances of age, they readily passed as ancient works. Had this been all, it would have been an instance of the possession of an imitative faculty, which is common enough and exists apart from genius. But Michelangelo's perfect and exquisite drawings with the point show that it was much more than this, that it was the result of that careful and conscientious study with the pen and crayon, now too much neglected, but which the old Masters pursued with so much diligence. It was then that Michelangelo laid the foundation of that extraordinary skill of hand which subsequently enabled him to master the practice of distemper, of oil and of frescopainting, although these branches of art were taken up at intervals only, and were not regarded by him as forming part of his profession, for he was unwilling to admit that he was a painter.

At the close of the first year of Michelangelo's engagement

to the brothers Currado, he was admitted in 1489, on the recommendation of Domenico, to the new Academy of Art opened by Lorenzo the Magnificent in the garden of his Villa, close to what is now the Piazza of San Marco. Thus suddenly ending his study of the art of painting, he was as suddenly transferred to the care and instruction of a Sculptor.

Lorenzo de' Medici formed a collection of works of art hitherto unequalled. It contained specimens of sculpture and of paintings, engravings, gems, enamels, in fine all that goes to make up the wonderful sum of human invention and skill passing under the name of fine art. He made it available for purposes of instruction, and was the first, as he has remained the most generous, benefactor of artists, by the use to which he applied the treasures, which he had accumulated. He founded a school and set over it Bertoldo, an able pupil of Donatello and a proficient in the art of casting in bronze.

Lorenzo saw with regret that the art of sculpture was neglected for that of painting, and this feeling on his part, no doubt influenced him in the choice of a Director for his new Academy. He applied to Domenico Ghirlandaio to recommend pupils, who seized the opportunity of parting with Michelangelo naming him amongst other students. How it was that he got rid of his contract with Michelangelo's father is not related, but that the youthful student should have so readily submitted to the change shows great docility; yet in the old biographies it is again recorded that he acted independently of all instruction. Is this in the least probable?

It is much more likely that he consulted Bertoldo, was wisely counselled, and followed the advice given. Amongst the

[1] Condivi relates the story of Michelangelo's translation to the School at San Mark's, as if he had broken his indenture and left Ghirlandaio without notice, he then makes him carve the mask of the faun at once without preliminary study of any kind.

documents now published for the first time is a letter to his father, written in 1509, in which he recognises his duties as an instructor of youth, and shows what ideas he held of a pupil's demeanour, and that he dismissed one who was disobedient and intractable. It is reasonable to suppose that the mature opinions of Michelangelo, based upon experience and usage, were the same as those which guided his precocious youth. He early sought the companionship of artists, that he might profit by their knowledge, and there is no real reason to think that he was other than a docile pupil, or that he did not accept and follow the advice of experience.

It seems probable that he was in the first place instructed in modelling. He then turned instinctively to carving in marble, and said at a later period of his life that he « had imbibed this disposition with his nurse's milk. » She was the wife of a stone-carver, but apart from such a fancy as this, the first practice of art which Michelangelo witnessed in childhood, was stone-carving going on all round him at Settignano, and such early impressions are apt to be permanent.

After some elementary instruction, he made his first attempt in marble, a copy of the mask of a faun of late Roman sculpture, which happily remains to this day, and is preserved in the National Museum of Florence.[1] It is related that Lorenzo observing the student earnestly occupied, was struck by the merit of his work and remarked to him « you have made the faun old, but have left him his teeth; have you not observed that in old people some are usually wanting? Next time that he passed that way he again looked at the youth's work, and found one of the teeth removed, the gap being represented with

[1] It was, with others of Michelangelo's works, in the Florence Gallery, but has now been placed with them in the new National Museum formed in what was the Bargello, formerly the Palace of the Podestà, which deserves praise as really a fine specimen of Florentine restoration.

MASK OF FAUN
HIS FIRST WORK IN MARBLE

PLATE 2.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

a close imitation of nature. » It is worthy of observation that Condivi, in relating this, notices the simplicity and docility of the youth.

However circumstantial this anecdote may be, the mask itself is inconsistent with it, for the mouth contains no teeth, except two rather clumsy projecting tusks, the cavity is represented somewhat imperfectly, but with patient labour, the tongue also being shown between the gums. Doubtless the story has some foundation. The young artist, on hearing the remark, may have removed all the teeth, but the probability is that Lorenzo was struck by the evidence of ability shown, and desirous of promoting the study of an art, which he thought neglected, he saw in the youth before him so much promise, that he charged himself with his fortunes.

It may be remarked that the original marble cannot have been a good specimen of sculpture. The copy shows a very free use of the drill, the outlines of the locks of hair being thus marked. This use of the drill was characteristic of decaying Roman sculpture, and it is an interesting coincidence, that the imitations of ancient art by the sculptors of the School of Niccolò Pisano are distinguished by the same peculiarity springing from the same cause.

Lorenzo de Medici sent for Ludovico Buonarroti, the father of Michelangelo, who was dissatisfied with the idea of his son being made a stone-carver; but overcome by the offers and the courtesy of the Magnificent, he placed him, himself, and his whole family, at Lorenzo's disposal with the usual exaggerated expressions of Italian compliment. Thus Michelangelo became an inmate of the palace, and the father was dismissed with an assurance that, should he desire official employment, he might depend upon the countenance and influence of the Medici.

Michelangelo now pursued his studies under the most favour-

able auspices, not of art only but of literature also; his genius was appreciated, and he associated with the most learned and polished men of the time, who frequented the house and table of the Magnificent, at which the youthful artist sat without distinction of precedence and was treated as a son. There must have been something attractive in his demeanour, and evidence of thought in his conversation, for Agnolo Poliziano noticed him especially, and being at the time Tutor to the sons of Lorenzo, he evidently adopted him as his pupil also, frequently conversing with him, and communicating valuable portions of his erudition. To these lessons may be attributed the young artist's frequent selection of mythological subjects for his statues.

During the four years which he passed in the Medici School of Art, he read with admiration the works of the Italian poets, especially those of Dante, and his own kindred genius afterwards found expression not only in works of art, but in poetry worthy of the Master he selected and of a high place in Italian literature.

Michelangelo's study of art, so far as can be judged by what is related, as well as by his early works which remain, was characterised by the dedication of part of his time to original composition, of which two examples exist in the Buonarroti Museum, and to drawing, the frescos of Masaccio being especially mentioned as objects of careful study. It therefore appears, that his whole attention was concentrated on the study of the human form to the neglect of accessories. This is observable especially in his painting, the backgrounds of which are so inferior to the works of his contemporaries.

One of his early efforts in composition preserved in the Buonarroti Museum, is a relief in white marble representing a « Battle of Hercules with Centaurs » which he undertook by

the advice of Politian, whose eloquent description inspired him with a vivid conception of the subject. The figures are on a small scale, being nineteen and one quarter inches in height; they are full of life energy and movement, and show a power of representing the human form, which might well excite the hopes of his friends for his future. The resemblance of the forms to those of Greek statues of Athletes is striking; this, and the fulness of muscular development show how completely whilst yet so young, he had escaped from that meagreness in representing the nude hitherto so common. The composition of the relief shows want of experience, for it is confused, and the relative positions of the figures are not well considered. The leg of a combatant, who strides across the body of a fallen centaur, is buried in it, whilst the fore legs of a galloping centaur pass into the body of his enemy, a foreshortened figure is badly formed and the head is too small; but the power with which the confused mass of combatants is represented, the variety, daring and originality manifested in the choice and representation of action, mark the approach of a new style. That his ideas of form were based on the study of ancient art, has been already noticed, but the lessons thus acquired were used with original power, even at this early period of his career. The relief is unfinished, and the marks of the toothed chisels which he used, are every where visible on the surface of the marble, and afford the clearest evidence of the facility and sureness of hand, with which he already dealt with his material.

About the same time he executed a small low relief of a Madonna in profile with the child on her lap, with other figures on a stair in the background. It was intended to be imitative of the manner of Donatello. Vasari observes that this was achieved « with such success that it seemed an original of that Mas-

ter, but with improved grace of form. »[1] It is not possible to find a criticism more remote from the truth than this. The forms are clumsy and ungraceful, the relative relief of the parts, which in the works of Donatello was managed with such perfect skill, is here misunderstood. The drapery is poorly designed in confused, tormented folds, and whilst it is evidently meant to be an imitation of the style of Donatello, it is in every way inferior to the works of that great Master. This is not to be wondered at, it is the work of a boy, and but for the injudicious and unfair remarks of Vasari every allowance would be made for its imperfections, whilst it is of interest as marking a stage in Michelangelo's progress. It is placed after the « Hercules and Centaurs » but it in reality looks like an earlier work. For instance the feet of the Madonna are so ill formed, that they seem swollen by disease, and the hands are too large, similar forms being much better expressed in the other relief.

Amongst the young artists studying sculpture in the Medici garden, was Pietro Torregiani of unquestionable merit but of a fierce and jealous temper. It may therefore be readily imagined how he would regard the favourite of Lorenzo. According to his own account, being irritated by sarcastic remarks made by Michelangelo at his cost, he struck him so violent a blow on the face as to break his nose, and disfigure him for life. This unhappy adventure may have been the result of that use of unmeasured language, which afterwards made Michelangelo so many enemies. On this occasion he met an adversary as hasty and fiery as he was himself, and who, being the stronger of the two had the best of the encounter. It would have been well for him if he had taken the lesson to heart. Moderation of language and demeanour would have been cheaply

[1] Vasari, Ed. cit., V. XII, p. 164.

MADONNA AND CHILD.
HIS THIRD WORK IN MARBLE

PLATE 3.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

purchased even at the price of a broken nose. As for Torregiani he disappeared dreading the wrath of Lorenzo. [1]

In 1492 on the eighth of the month of April, the Magnificent Lorenzo died in his villa of Careggi, having a short time before reached his forty-fourth year.

« In the extremity of pain and with every sign of religious fervour, that life was extinguished, than which no other ever was prayed for with more tears, nor in after times became more celebrated. Two days before, a thunderbolt fell on the Cupola of Sta Maria del Fiore and broke one of the great marble ribs, curving towards that side on which stands the house of the Medici, the falling fragments piercing in several places the vault of the temple. On the night of the same day which was the last of Lorenzo, Pier Leoni di Spoleto, a professor of medicine of high reputation, was found dead in a well at San Gervasio, either he had in despair thrown himself in, or he had been thrown in by others. In the city great was the consternation and dread of the future to those, who had unwillingly submitted to Lorenzo: his most attached friends fled or disappeared: two years afterwards Pico della Mirandola and Agnolo Poliziano, both being younger than Lorenzo also died, as did the more aged Marsilio Ficino. » [2]

Michelangelo was deeply affected by the loss of his munificent friend, to whom he could not be otherwise than gratefully attached, who had discerned his early promise and wisely provided for his training in a knowledge of art and who made his path easy by placing him in favourable circumstances to follow out his studies with every conceivable advantage. The subject appears to have been passed over by his biographers, but it is of interest to inquire what was the influence upon the

[1] Vasari, Ed. cit., V. VII, p. 205.
[2] Gino Capponi, History of the Republic of Florence.

young artist's disposition and character, of his residence in the house of Lorenzo the Magnificent and of his intercourse with the brilliant men whom he met there.

Morally considered, the atmosphere of that society was far from pure. Religiously, whatever it may have been, it was hardly christian. The subsequent life of Michelangelo shows that it neither corrupted his morality, nor undermined his faith. Living amongst parasites, he preserved his independence of character, and on the death of Lorenzo, he came forth from the Medici palace untainted; a good son, a good citizen, a lover of freedom, so entirely unspoilt by the luxury in which he had lived, that he was ready for the exercise of self denial and to embrace a laborious life.

Michelangelo, then seventeen years of age, returned to his father's house, and set up his studio, in which, faithful to his classic associations, his first work was a statue of the demigod Hercules sculptured from a block of marble seven feet eight inches in height. This could not have occupied less than a year to complete, in all probability somewhat more. It appears to have found a purchaser in Filippo Strozzi, for it remained in his residence till the time of the siege of Florence, when it was purchased by Giovan Battista Palla from Agostino Dini administrator of the Strozzi, and was sent to France for king Francis the first. It is not known what has become of it.

If Michelangelo resumed his palette, this is the period to which may most safely be assigned the picture of the Virgin and Child with St John and other figures now in the National Gallery, London.

Piero, the eldest son of Lorenzo, on his father's death succeeded to his position in the Florentine State, which he soon sacrificed by his vices and misconduct. It appears that he had not forgotten his companionship with Michelangelo, which he

showed in an odd but characteristic way by sending for him to make a man of snow, at the time of a heavy snow storm. This was abundantly silly, but it may be remembered in extenuation, that it was then the custom to employ artists of eminence to design and execute decorations of the most ephemeral character. The invitation to make the statue of snow was followed by another to take up his old quarters in the palace, to which Michelangelo consented, but he was not long of perceiving that he was not understood and that Piero considered his Spanish groom, who could outrun a horse, the more wonderful man of the two.

During his second residence in the palace Michelangelo sculptured a crucifix in wood for an excellent and appreciating friend, the Prior of Santo Spirito. It is to be lamented that this work, executed immediately before the commencement of his long and laborious study of anatomy, is lost, as it would have formed a link between his early and his later productions. He was assisted in his course of dissection, which he now commenced, by the good offices of the Prior, who used his influence to procure him subjects from the adjoining hospital, and he devoted himself with such energy to this study and continued it so long, that he injured his health, but by this means he acquired that intimate knowledge of the human form, which made him the first draughtsman of his age, and enabled him to represent with accuracy every movement of which it is capable.

The day was now approaching, when Michelangelo was to leave Florence for the first time. His natural sagacity enabled him to perceive, that the bad government and vices of Piero must lead to the expulsion from the city of the Medici and of their friends and adherents, and he resolved to depart before the outbreak of popular tumults, which must expose all connected with that family to danger: nor was the element of the supernatural wanting to strengthen his resolution. The belief in warn-

ings, portents and omens was then general, and Michelangelo was disposed to mysticism, increased by his intercourse with Savonarola and adoption of his opinions. The vision of Cardiere, who saw in his sleep the figure of Lorenzo in mourning, [1] and was charged by it with a message to the misguided Piero, the repetition of the dream, and the contempt with which it was treated when made known to the Medici, showing that he was neither to be warned nor saved, convinced Michelangelo, and decided his departure.

It may be inquired why he abandoned his father and brothers, to whom he was so much attached, but they were in no danger, whilst he evidently was so as a known associate of the Medici, and his presence might have done his family more harm than good. As it happened Ludovico his father was, in 1494, deprived of his office of ordinary and extraordinary accountant in the Custom-house, which office he held at the munificent salary of twelve livres a month. When he asked it of Lorenzo, the Magnificent, it was bestowed with the significant remark « You will be always poor » [2] a prophecy completely realised.

With two friends, Michelangelo took the road to Bologna, where the three companions were arrested for a breach of the passport regulations. From this embarrassment they were relieved by the kindness of Messer Gianfrancesco Aldovrandini, a Bolognese gentleman who invited Michelangelo to his house, an invitation, which he accepted after dividing his funds between his friends. During his residence of about a year in Bologna, he sculptured at the request of the generous Aldovrandini, the figure of an Angel for the altar of St Domenic, which stands in front of the highly ornate sarcophagus, containing the body of that Saint.

[1] Condivi, Ed. cit., p. 9.
[2] Condivi, Ed. cit., p. 7.

This exquisite statuette, hardly two feet high, represents an Angel kneeling on one knee, and on the other resting a candelabrum, which it steadies with both hands. The youthful face is manifestly a portrait of a lovely child. Can it have been the pet of his friend? The expression is indescribably sweet, and full of a gentle devotion appropriate to its position on the altar. The hair is unsurpassably beautiful, curling and twining locks are wrought out in the marble with a loving chisel, which did not quit its work till nothing more could be done to give it perfection. The drapery is somewhat heavy for an angel's garments, but the artist evidently preferred folds made by a thick stuff, to those presented by lighter fabrics. The hands and feet are beautiful, especially the former which are exquisitely true to nature. The wings imitated from real wings are too true and feathery, and suggest that the Angel never could rise from earth by their aid. It is evident that the grand ideal wings represented by the old Masters, capable of a flight which would pierce the heavens, are forgotten and the wings of a fowl substituted.[1] The candelabrum is a pretty piece of ornament, and shows that Michelangelo was familiar with the usual decorative forms.

A small statue of St Petronius, placed with others on the cornice of the sarcophagus, and left incomplete by Niccolò de Bari, was also finished by Michelangelo. Below it is a relief by Niccolò Pisano, medieval in composition, yet full of that imitation of Roman art, derived from the study of classic reliefs observable in the Pisan school. Over the cornice are statuettes of Saints with drapery in perpendicular fluted folds in the old manner. Michelangelo cared not for these nor to harmonise

[1] Conventional treatment in art ought to be maintained wherever the idea represented is conventional; to sculpture or paint an angel's wings with a realistic imitation of the feather and down of a birds wing is to represent «a monster of modern mythology.»

his work with them; he must show the form beneath the drapery, which he broke up into zigzag turbulent folds. The other statues in their doll-like simplicity present no idea beyond the diminutive figures, which they really are, whilst the real size is forgotten in that by Michelangelo, so suggestive is it of animated reality.

Work failing, Michelangelo became desirous of returning to Florence, being strengthened in this, according to Condivi, by the enmity and jealousy of Bolognese sculptors, who resented the employment of a foreigner on the tomb of St Domenic; all the more so, that the excellence of the workmanship and the admiration with which it was regarded left no room for adverse criticism.

He left Bologna to the great regret of Aldovrandini, who had formed for him a warm friendship, attracted by his powers as an artist, by his mental endowments, and delighted by the taste with which he read the rhymes of Dante in his melodious Tuscan, so different from the harsh Bolognese accent. Michelangelo also illustrated the Poet with his pencil.[1] These drawings would have been invaluable, had they been preserved to the present time, as would also have been his comments on Dante which fascinated Aldovrandini as well as the reading.

At Florence peace and order had been restored, mainly by the powerful influence of the Monk Girolamo Savonarola, after the expulsion of the Medici and after Charles VIII, who had been received with popular and mistaken confidence and treated with misapplied splendour, had retired from the city, dreading the ringing of the bells threatened by the daring and patriotic Capponi and the uprising in wrath of the people, which would

[1] A sketch book of Michelangelo, containing illustrations by his hand of the poems of Dante, was in possession of the sculptor Antonio Montauti, who unhappily lost it at sea on his passage to Rome. De Batines, *Bibliografia Dantesca*. Prato, Tipografia Aldina, 1845, V. I, p. 301.

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ST JOHN BAPTIST
PROPERTY OF COUNT ROSSELMINI GUALANDI
PISA

PLATE 5.

follow their clangour, so that when Michelangelo returned, he found safety and resumed the practice of his art undisturbed.

He also found a friend in a Medici yet in Florence, Lorenzo di Pier Francesco, and he executed a statue of St John for him, which, like so many other works of this time, was till lately believed to be lost. But a figure of St John, existing in the Palazzo of the Count Rosselmini-Gualandi and believed to be by Donatello, has been lately declared by Professor Salvino Salvini a work of Michelangelo, an opinion since confirmed by several eminent artists who have studied it.

St John is represented as a youth of about sixteen years of age. He holds in his right hand what is supposed to be a locust by some, a root by others, and in his left a piece of honeycomb. He has just bitten off the head of the locust or part of the root, and starts back with an expression of distaste. He is standing on his left leg, whilst the right is bent forward at the knee, and the foot raised, as if he were about to move onwards. The sudden backward motion throws him off his centre of gravity, and he is for the moment in a position, which it would be impossible to maintain without stumbling. This selection of a momentary action is very characteristic of Michelangelo and suggestive of this being his work. It is precisely such a statue as the artist of the Angel at Bologna might execute, there is so much in it recalling the grace and beauty of that production. The hair although not so highly finished is in the same manner, the face has a similar type of youthful beauty. The hands and feet of this statue are eminently characteristic of Michelangelo. The absence of that obtrusive display of anatomical knowledge, which impairs rather than increases admiration of Michelangelo's later works, is a pleasing feature of this beautiful creation. This fine statue forms a link between that of the Angel at Bologna and the Cupid and Bacchus soon afterwards produced in Rome.

The history of the accidental discovery of this treasure is not less curious, than that of the finding of the Cupid. The Chevalier Ranieri Pesciolini a Pisan gentleman, being on a visit to Florence in 1817, frequented shops in which works of art are sold, and in one of these observed this figure covered with dust, partially hidden by objects of bric-a-brac. On asking the price he was told one hundred Tuscan livres, a trifling sum which he at once paid, and had the statue packed and taken to his residence at Pisa.[1] The Palazzo with this and other works of art has passed into the hands of the Count Rosselmini-Gualandi, who is now the fortunate possessor of this rare and beautiful work.[2]

His next statue was a recumbent and sleeping Cupid, represented as a child of six or seven years of age, which so closely resembled an ancient work in style, that when seen by Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de Medici, he suggested that it might be artificially discoloured, and that thus it might fetch a higher price; advice more consistent with the trading instincts of a Medici, than with honesty. Michelangelo was amused by the idea, and coloured the statue and gave it the appearance of antiquity, but he parted with it, without increasing its price to Messer Baldassarre del Milanese, a dealer, who sold it in Rome to the Cardinal San Giorgio as an ancient work of art for a sum equivalent to ninety-six pounds Stg.[3] having paid about fourteen pounds to the artist.[4]

The Cardinal, having subsequently reason to think, that he had been deceived, made inquiries and learnt that the statue was a modern work made in Florence. His vanity as a judge

[1] From a history of this statue published in the Gazzetta d'Italia, an ably conducted Florentine Journal.

[2] By the courteous permission of the Count Rosselmini-Gualandi, I have been enabled to add a careful out line of this interesting statue to the illustrations of this work.

[3] Two hundred ducats.

[4] Thirty ducats.

being wounded, he returned the statue to the dealer, whom he compelled to refund the price, and he sent one of his gentlemen to Florence to discover the artist.

It is related that, amongst others, he saw Michelangelo, who in his presence made a pen drawing of a hand, which impressed him deeply with a sense of the artist's powers. In the course of conversation Michelangelo, amongst others of his works, mentioned the Cupid in imitation of the antique, when the agent of the Cardinal informed him of the deceit, which had been practised and excited his indignation.[1] He was now invited to visit Rome, and assured of the favourable reception of his Eminence, who would provide him with the means of following his profession and with commissions.

[1] This statue passed into the possession of the Duke Valentino and was presented by him together with a Venus, an ancient work of art, to Isabella Marchioness of Mantua, who loved art for its own sake.

Chapter II

Michelangelo saw Rome for the first time on the twenty-fifth of June 1496. With what eager anticipations must he have passed under the archway, probably of the ancient Porta del Popolo, and gazed on the diverging streets leading to different quarters of the city.

Whatever these anticipations may have been on that memorable event, of improvement in his art, of employers, of new paths to fame, he little imagined that in after days he should leave such monuments of his genius, that his name would be associated with Rome for ever, as Sculptor, Painter, and Architect. As little could he foresee what were to be the trials and persecutions, which awaited him in that city, or he might have paused before he entered it, even if he had seen in vision the statue of Moses, the frescos of the Sistine, or the cupola of St Peter's.

So soon as he arrived, he presented the letter of recommendation, with which he had been provided by Lorenzo di Pier

Francesco de'Medici, to His Eminence Giovanni Riario Cardinal of St George, who received him very graciously, and evidently attached no blame to him as sculptor of the statue of Cupid, which had been imposed upon him as ancient by the dealer Baldassare. The Cardinal asked him to look at his collection of statues, and to give his opinion: Michelangelo has himself recorded his impressions in the following letter to his friend Lorenzo.

11th day of July 1496.

« Magnificent Lorenzo. This is to inform you how, that on Saturday last we arrived safely, and without loss of time proceeded to visit the Cardinal of San Giorgio, to whom I presented your letter. He appeared to be glad to see me, and immediately expressed a wish that I should go to see certain figures, which occupied me all that day, so that on that day I delivered no other of your letters. Afterwards on Sunday the Cardinal came to the new house and inquired for me. I went to him, and he asked me what I thought of the things, which I had seen, regarding these I said what I felt, and certainly I think that there are many beautiful things. The Cardinal next asked me if I was disposed to make something beautiful, I answered that I could not do such fine things, but that he should see what I could do. We have purchased a piece of marble large enough to make a figure life-size, and on Monday I shall begin to work. On Monday last I presented your other letters of recommendation to Rucellai, who offered me what money I might want, also those to Cavalcante. I then delivered the letter to Baldassare, [1] and demanded the Cupid from him, and said that I would repay him his money, he replied very roughly, that he would rather break it in a hundred pieces, that he had bought it and it was

[1] Baldassare del Milanese, who cheated the Cardinal with the statue of Cupid.

his, and that he had letters, that he had satisfied him who sent it, and that he never expected to have to return it and he complained much of your having spoken ill of him. Some of our Florentines here attempted to make up matters between us, but without success. Now I count on the Cardinal to assist me, so I am advised by Baldassare Balducci, and you shall hear the results. No more by this, to you I recommend myself. May God keep you from evil. [1]

« MICHELAGNOLO IN ROME.

« *To Sandro Botticelli at Florence.* »

Thus addressed, for it was not yet safe to write openly to a Medici. This letter would have possessed still greater interest, had the writer referred more particularly to the statue, which he intended to commence on Monday. A year elapsed before he began the Bacchus: neither Vasari nor Condivi informs us, how this year was employed. Michelangelo's motives for setting to work were so strong, that this silence cannot be accepted as any proof, that he did not do so. As a means of filling up the interval, it has been suggested that the statue of the Dying Adonis was executed at this time, but it is entirely unlike his early works, both in style and manner of execution. As it is of Serravezza marble, it cannot be much earlier than 1517, when the Serravezza quarries were being worked for the first time. The statue which in respect of subject, manner and execution most completely harmonizes with Michelangelo's antecedent and immediately subsequent works, is the « Cupid » of the South Kensington Museum in London.

[1] Twice published by Gualandi. And republished more accurately by the learned Annotators of Vasari, the Cavalieri Milanesi and Pini.

Does this beautiful statue really represent a Cupid? It is that of a muscular youth of about nineteen years of age, a figure of perfect early manhood, such as the genius of Michelangelo might assign to the youthful Apollo. His knitted brow and stern expression of countenance, as he gazes downwards from the height of Olympus, is rather that of the avenger of Latona, than the son of Venus. This suggestion as to the subject also explains the action and general character of this statue, better than the name usually assigned to it of Cupid. True, it is devoid of the feminine softness of form assigned by Greek sculptors to the youthful Apollo, but it is still more remote in its features from their representations of the God of love. If this be an Apollo as suggested, it is such a representation of that God as Michelangelo would conceive, for his ideal was at all times very different from that of the Greeks, and any comparison between his works and theirs can only make the difference manifest, proving, that however carefully he studied ancient works of sculpture, they could not so control the bent of his genius, as to transform him into an imitator. From them he learnt that there was a higher level in art, than that attained by his predecessors, and they roused his ambition.

In his representations of pagan divinities an element was wanting in Michelangelo, which in some manner must have been more or less present to the mind of every Greek sculptor, namely that of belief. Of the high influence exercised by forms of faith on the productions of art, there can be no question: by them, even artists possessed of very little skill of design have thrown into their immature works so much feeling, that in spite of their imperfections they fascinate not only those imbued with sentiment, who are deficient judges of art, and who therefore suppose that the sentiment and the deficient form are inseparable, but those also of more cultivation, who readily forgive the defects

for the sake of the expression, which they know may be combined with perfect form.

Michelangelo's classic divinities are necessarily without the evidence of any faith on his part, they are only beautiful human beings, but in a very different sense from that in which the ancient divinities are beautiful, and it is unreasonable to compare them with works of art produced under such different conditions, and by minds so differently influenced. It may be regretted that, in accordance with the mania of his age, Michelangelo, at this period of his noble career, selected subjects from dead pagan myths, which gave him nothing but names, which with their associations are a veil between us and the full comprehension and enjoyment of his works. Call this statue a young hunter, banish the ideas inspired by the names of Apollo or Cupid, and the veil is rent, and it is seen in all its beauty and truthfulness to nature. If as the ideal of a God it may not be compared with Greek art, how infinitely more precious it is on this very account, as may be verified by comparison between it and the tame, gracefully imitative, pagan deities of those modern sculptors, who still dedicate their art to the illustration of mythology or to equally barren allegories.

Like too many of Michelangelo's creations, this statue had disappeared. Some years ago the Professor Miliarini and the eminent sculptor the Cavaliere Santarelli visited the gardens of the Oricellari (in Florence) to look at some works of art, and to give an opinion of them to Signor Giglio, who purchased on account of the Marchese Campani. They were invited by the man in charge to see some figures in a cellar, where they found three by Andrea Pisano. The attention of Santarelli was attracted by another in a dark corner, and after peering at it in the uncertain light, he called to Miliarini and said « look at that » after an earnest and startled look, he said « It is his » and

the sculptor replied « certainly it is his. » This was the statue, which is now the chief ornament of the South-Kensington-Museum.

The left arm unhappily was wanting, broken off nearly across the deltoid, the right hand was also broken and obviously never had been finished. Signor Santarelli restored the left arm, as it is now seen; the right hand he did not touch. [1]

The hair has been left unfinished by Michelangelo, an omission to be regretted, for if he had sculptured it with all the grace and loving care of his previous works, he would have lightened and reduced it; at present it is heavy in mass and form.

It is difficult by any language of praise to do justice to this beautiful work of art, in which so many qualities are combined. Living energy of expression and form with such perfect arrangement and action, that in every view which can be taken of it, it seems faultless; whilst in truth to nature, united with refinement of detail and infinite skill of technical execution, it is so admirable, that when it is remembered what was the probable period of its production, and what up to that time had been effected in sculpture, our admiration of the genius of this author must be enhanced, and we may fully sympathize with the enthusiasm with which the works of Michelangelo were regarded by the nobler and more discerning of his compatriots.

It is related that about this time, the first year of his stay in Rome, Michelangelo made a cartoon for a picture of St Francis receiving the stigmata, but that he shrank from painting it, and the design was placed in the hands of a very humble artist to be coloured, who acted also as barber to the Cardinal. The picture thus produced between Michelangelo and the barber artist, was placed in the Church of San Pietro in Montorio, but

[1] Signor Santarelli related to me the above anecdote, and informed me of his restoration precisely as stated in the text.

is now lost. The word cartoon is apt to mislead; the Italians apply it as frequently to a sketch as to a large working drawing, thus it is probable that Michelangelo only made a sketch, which he was at all times able to do with extraordinary rapidity. The so called cartoon of St Francis probably did not occupy him for one day.

To render assistance to others, especially artists, was a feature of his character, he readily made designs as on this occasion, whence no doubt, the mistakes which have arisen in attributing pictures to him, strongly marked by his characteristic design, which it cannot be shown, even traditionally, that he painted.

Whilst Michelangelo was thus occupied in Rome, his father led a far from cheerful life in Florence, being poor and oppressed with debts. His family consisted of Lionardo his eldest son, who was born on the 16th of November 1473. Being of a religious disposition, persuaded by the preaching of Savonarola, he became a Dominican monk. He was of infirm health, and little is known of him. Buonarroto, the third son, was born on the 26th of May 1477. He was a cloth merchant and served first as an assistant in the shop of the Strozzi in Porta Rossa, and was thereafter established on his own account by the generosity of Michelangelo. He was in the public service in 1513 and again in 1525, being also one of the Priors for the months of November and December 1515 and was in office on the occasion of the solemn entry of Leo X into Florence that year, and followed him to Bologna. He was made Count Palatine in common with other members of the Signory, who received the Pope, with the right of transmitting his honours to his descendants. The Pope conferred various privileges on the nobles thus created with an addition to their armorials of a chief or, with the Medici ball, azure, charged with three fleur de Lys,

placed between the letters L. X. sable. This coat of arms was distinctive of the descendants of Buonarroto now extinct. He was a Captain of the Guelf party in 1519, Gonfaloniere of his company in 1521, and died of the plague on the second of July 1528. Giovan Simone was the fourth son. He was born on the 11th of March 1479. In his youth he studied literature, and it is said was a facile and facetious rhymester. He travelled in various parts of Europe, and after a severe rebuke from Michelangelo, which will be recounted in its place, he left the paternal home and went to Portugal intending to sail for India. In 1512 he was in Italy, and joined his brothers in business. Wasteful and a bad son, he caused much displeasure to Michelangelo. He died the 9th January 1548. There are few records of the life of Sigismund the fifth son, he was a soldier, now serving under one partizan leader, now another, and was in the service of the Republic in 1527. He returned to the paternal villa at Settignano in 1540, where he passed a peasant existence, and died on the 13th November 1555.[1]

The brothers of Michelangelo might have been passed without notice, they were men without gifts, with very little capacity, and frequently played an unsatisfactory part in the family history, but as his brothers, with the exception of the eldest they occasionally appear in his life. He made many sacrifices for them, suffered much on their account, and they often repaid his good offices with ingratitude, yet they could not wear out his brotherly affection. To Buonarroto the best of them he was much attached, and when absent from Florence, chiefly corresponded with him.

The father's income was a small one, and he had been deprived of his paltry salary from a public office on the expulsion of the Medici, whilst the expenses of living in Florence had been in-

[1] Extracted from the genealogy of the Buonarroti by Count Louis Passerini.

creased by the evil days which overtook the Republic, by famine, by the influx of a starving peasantry bringing disease in their train, and to add to these misfortunes the plague threatened to break out.

With the intense selfishness which characterized the family, they desired the presence of Michelangelo that he might, as he had done before when resident in Florence, assist to support his thriftless relatives. The father entreated him to return, and finally sent Buonarroto to explain personally the straits to which they were reduced. Michelangelo wrote to his father on the 19th of August 1497 a letter full of affection, saying to him that Buonarroto, who had arrived in safety, had by word of mouth explained everything, and in what manner he was molested by Consiglio, the Mercer, who in no way would come to terms as to a debt of ninety florins in gold;[1] he advised him to agree with him, and to give him some ducats, and then added:

« What you consent to give him let me know and I will send it to you, if you have not enough, although I have but little, as I have told you, I shall strive to gather it or to borrow, so that you may not have to apply to the pawnbroker, as Buonarroto says. Do not wonder, if I have sometimes expressed myself impatiently, I have at times for many reasons, much provocation, such as may happen to those absent from home. I undertook to make a statue for Piero de' Medici, and I bought the marble, which however I did not commence, because he was faithless to his promises, consequently I am making a figure on my own account. I purchased a piece of marble for five ducats, which proved bad, so I lost the money, and I bought another at five ducats and this is on my own account. Thus you may believe that I also have my expenses and my hard work, but that which you ask of me I shall send,

[1] L. 43 Stg.

should I sell myself as a slave. » [1] This is the first of those family letters, which show us the great artist, impoverished and harassed by the sordid claims made upon him, but faithful to the discharge of his duty, honouring his father, and sacrificing himself on the family altar.

To estimate his goodness aright and the warmth of his affections, the contrast which his life presents, as his genius carried him upwards, and the mean calls of his family without sympathy for his pursuits or estimate of his ability pressed him downwards, must be considered. If, as he says himself, he expressed himself impatiently, as well he might, his actions were characterized by an amount of patient self denial, a submission to the calls of duty equally touching and admirable.

Michelangelo's letter alludes to an intended commission by Piero de'Medici, which he could not regret went no further. A wanderer and conspirator, this unworthy man had come to Rome to be near his brother the Cardinal, not with any special regard for him, but that he might associate him with his attempts for the recovery of Florence. He lived scandalously and amongst his base companions, Mariano da Gennazano, General at that time of the Agostinians, was conspicuous as the bitter hater of Savonarola. He availed himself of the pulpit to hurl his anathemas against the great Dominican, whose life was such a contrast to his own. Michelangelo who was an adherent of Savonarola, heard him maligned as a heretic with impatience, and wrote to his brother Buonarroto.

« I have received thy letter from which I also derived great comfort, especially from what I hear of the acts of the saintly Fra Jeronimo, who makes all Rome speak of him and where it

[1] The Buonarroti Archives. Michelangelo to his Father 19th August 1497. Although now twenty-two years of age, Michelangelo had not attained his majority, which would have made him a free agent. He, like every other Florentine, was under paternal control till his father by his own free will granted him emancipation.

is said that he is a pestilent heretic, therefore by all means let him come to Rome to preach, where in time he also will be worshipped.... Fra Mariano says very evil things of your prophet. No more at present, for I am in haste; there are no news, except that yesterday seven bishops of Carthage were made,[1] and five were hung. March 1497. To the prudent youth Buonarroto of Ludovico Buonarroti in Florence. »[2]

Apparently Cardinal San Giorgio was a mere collector of ancient sculpture; he was not influenced to purchase, either the now great artist's work, or to give any further commission, and it was not till a year after his arrival in Rome, that he found an employer in Signor Iacopo Galli, a Roman gentleman of ability and taste, who purchased from him his statue of Cupid, if it is to be so called, and conferred upon him another commission, which resulted in the statue of Bacchus, which has been lately removed from the Florence Gallery to the new National Museum in the ancient palace of the Podestà, or Bargello, as it was called at a later period, and where it is now seen to great advantage.

Condivi thus describes this statue. « The countenance is joyous, with wanton eyes like those overcome with wine. He holds in his right hand a cup in the attitude of one who would drink, gazing on the wine of which he was the inventor, denoted by the garland of vine leaves, which binds his temples. On the left arm the skin of a panther, with his left hand he grasps a bunch of grapes, which a merry and youthful satyr placed near him, furtively eats. »

By some writers it has been complained that Bacchus is represented under a sensual aspect as the merry God of the vintage, and not with the truer inspiration of Greek art.

[1] « Bishops of Carthage » were criminals pilloried with paper mitres on their heads.
[2] From the Buonarroti Archives.

Surely an unreasonable criticism. The statue is much better as it is, in all its originality of conception, than if it had exhibited a perfect counterpart of Greek sentiment. Under the name of Bacchus, by whom the Italians still familiarly swear, is represented, not long forgotten mysteries, but vintage festivity, the excitement produced by wine, not drunkenness, but that amount of intoxication which finds expression in merriment and singing; more than this would not have been true to Italian nature.

Condivi's description, true in part, is in some respects inaccurate. The God stands with trembling balance on both legs, the left straight, the right bent at the knee, the heel being raised, and the movement expressive of uncertain equipoise. The shoulders are thrown back, the left arm falls straight by the side, and the hand grasps, not the grapes, but the panther skin with a faltering action infinitely suggestive. The right hand, exquisitely formed, raises the cup, on which the eyes are fixed, and a daring attempt to indicate its lightness has left the arm without support of any kind. It is to be regretted that the sculptor did not hollow the cup to the utmost of which marble is capable, for this not being done, its weight has broken the arm at the wrist.

The usual tree trunk, common in sculpture to strengthen the supporting leg is present, but is dealt with in a novel manner. Perforated here and there, separated from the leg at intervals, it is like a flying buttress, strengthening and sustaining, but free of heaviness, whilst the youthful faun is poised upon it like a finial, adding to its strength and giving it beauty. He joyously eats his grapes, the bunch touching the statue and « furtively » contributing to its support.

The body and limbs are exquisitely modelled and are beautiful in form, the details of every part are conducted with careful

realism, but with the purest taste. The hair is so finely wrought, that portions of some of the locks are detached allowing the light to pass between them and the head.

It is of importance to noté this accuracy and high finish, for it indicates that he worked undisturbed by jealous rivals and comparatively free from care. His art at this time, and during the remainder of his stay at Rome, is characterized by the presence of gentle emotions; his « terribile » was not yet evoked.

The Bacchus finished, Michelangelo was now to exhibit his powers under a new aspect, to represent the deepest sorrow, which humanity ever endured, the profound mystery of the Saviour of the world, the Son of God under the power of death. He was to embody in marble the Pietà.

The world is indebted to the Cardinal of St Denis,[1] Ambassador from Charles VIII to the Roman Court, for this employment of the genius of Michelangelo.

In this hitherto unequalled and still unsurpassed group, the sorrowing mother sits on a stone by the place where the cross was elevated, and the dead body of Jesus lies upon her lap. Our deepest sympathy is awakened by this representation, in which the means are rejected hitherto adopted by artists to excite reverence and evoke pity; the dead Christ had been usually

[1] The contract is preserved in the Buonarroti Archives, and the following are extracts.

Die XXVI mensis Augusti 1498.

« Be it clear and manifest to whomsoever may read this present writing, that the most Reverend Cardinal of San Dionisio has agreed with the Master Michelangelo Florentine Statuary, that the said Master should make a Pietà of marble at his cost. That is a Virgin draped, with Christ dead in her arms, of the size of life for the price of four hundred and fifty ducats, (about L. 225 Stg.) of gold, in the space of one year. » The rate of payment is then stated, one hundred ducats per quarter. « And I, Iacobo Galli promise to His most Reverend Lordship, that the said Michelangelo shall execute the said work in a year, and that it shall be the most beautiful work of marble in Rome, and that no Master living could do it so well. »

Thus his fast friend Iacopo Galli pledges himself and acknowledges the receipt of one hundred and fifty ducats in advance.

sculptured, whether on the cross or prepared for burial, as emaciated, the beauty gone for very trouble, the hands and feet and side pierced with blood stained, gaping wounds, even the flesh scourged from the bones, the hair dishevelled and the head lacerated with thorns. The taste of Michelangelo revolted against such methods of exciting feeling; he knew them to be inconsistent with the dignity of his art, and rising far above these ideas still prevalent, and found even now in so called « ecclesiastical art » he appealed to higher intelligence, to a more lofty view of the true ideal of Christian art, which in this group he has carried out with a truthfulness of enlightened religious feeling never before attained in such representations.

The noble figure of the Mother has been variously criticized, but to understand its beauty, we must enter into the thoughts of its creator. In reply to those, who said that the Mother was too young as compared with the age of the son, he replied:

« Know you not, that chaste women maintain their appearance of youth much more, than those who are not so? How much more a Virgin, whose thoughts have ever been pure; but I would further add, that besides the maintenance of this blooming youth, as the natural result of her perfect purity, it is also credible that divine power assisted in thus manifesting to the world the virginity and sinlessness of the mother. Do not therefore wonder that I made the Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, young in comparison with the Son, and that I represented the Son of his true age. »

The Pietà was completed between 1499 and 1500. A letter written hy Michelangelo to his father states, that he could not leave Rome, because he had not settled his affairs with the Cardinal, and that he would not depart till he was satisfied and remunerated for his work, but he hoped to be free in a week.

Michelangelo's letter to his father of August 1497, alludes to an intended commission by Piero de' Medici, who however was faithless to his promise, and he therefore proposed to commence a statue on his own account; but it is probable that this work, if it was then begun, was interrupted by the order for the Bacchus, and subsequently by that for the Pietà, which being completed, he remained another year in Rome, during which time it can hardly be doubted that he employed himself as usual. The group of the Madonna and Child at Bruges appears to be the work, which, in style, execution and sentiment, best fills the gap occurring here in the history of his creations. By a just sequence of ideas it might follow the Pietà. Portraying the Mother and Child at a happy period of their existence, there is yet a sadness in the beautiful countenance of the Mother, and a deep gravity in that of the divine Child suggestive of the shadow of the cross, as if the impression produced by his last great work still survived in the artist's mind, and was imparted to this new production of his chisel. What the Madonna of San Sisto is to painting, this group is to sculpture. Whatever there may be of devotional feeling in early christian art, or in the conceptions of the first masters of the revival, are concentrated in it. Besides the depth of sentiment by which it is characterized, there is a beauty of form, a grace and dignity of attitude, and a skilful disposition of the drapery more refined than in any previous work; whilst there is not yet that exaggeration either of action or of shape, so soon after to be characteristic of Michelangelo's design. There is still a reminiscence of the school of Donatello, in which he was trained by Bertoldo, and in the absence of any evidence of the exact period of the production of this admirable work of art, there is no fitter suggestion, than that it is of this time, especially as it is soon after alluded to, as being in existence.

Buonarroto returned from Rome to Florence after a somewhat prolonged visit to his brother in December 1500, and brought the good news with him that Michelangelo had been able to save some money, and had thought of assisting his brothers, by setting up a warehouse in Florence for Buonarroto and Giovansimone.

Ludovico, the father, wrote to his great son, to express his contentment, the following singular letter, which shows at what cost to that son the money was saved, which so gratified the father.

Florence, 19th December 1500.

« I see that thou hast saved something, and the love that thou bearest to thy brothers, is a great consolation to me. With regard to the money, which thou wouldst invest on a shop for Buonarroto and Giansimone, I have sought and am still seeking, not yet having found, a bargain which satisfies me. It is true that I have some good negotiations in hand, but one must keep one's eyes open, and take care not to be mixed up with others. I shall take it quietly, and seek good advice and shall inform you of everything, when the time comes.

Buonarroto tells me that you live with great economy or rather penury: economy is a good thing, but penurious habits are bad, and displeasing to God and to people of this world, besides they will injure you in soul and body. Whilst you are yet young, you may bear the inconvenience for a time, but when the strength of youth is gone, maladies and infirmities will declare themselves the consequences of poor living and of penurious habits.

As has been said, economy is well, but above all things no penury. Live moderately and do not labour too much, and preserve yourself from want, because of your art. If you be-

came ill (from which God preserve you), you would be a lost man: above all things take care of your head, keep it moderately warm and never wash yourself; have yourself rubbed down, but no washing.

Buonarroto tells me that one of your sides is swollen, this comes of poor living and fatigue, and from eating bad and windy things, or from suffering from cold or damp feet. I have had it myself, and it yet annoys me frequently, when I eat windy things or suffer from cold. Our Francesco had it, and so had Gismondo. Guard yourself from such things, besides it is dangerous for the tympanum. Beware.

I will now tell you of the medicine which I made: I remained for some days eating only boiled bread, or chicken or egg. I took by the mouth a little cassia, and I made a poultice of thyme, which I put into a pan with rose oil and camomile oil, and thus I made the poultice, and covered the front of my body, and in a few days I got well. However take care, for it is dangerous. May Christ guard you from evil. » [1]

He then adds a postscript.

« Buonarroto tells me that you have that youth with you, that is Piero di Giannotto; he tells me that he is a good youth and loves you and is faithful. I recommend him to you, and act towards him, as he does to you. »

He ends as usual by pressing his son to return home. This strange letter from the garrulous father shows, what were even at this early period the habits of life of Michelangelo. He appears to have been indifferent to personal comfort or appearance, to have denied himself systematically, whilst he gave generously to aid his family. His hard work is also alluded to in this letter, the cause no doubt of the swelling of one side, was wielding the mallet with the energy which was his habit.

[1] The Buonarroti Archives.

Michelangelo, who was winning friends and reputation in Rome and at this time working peacefully, and it is to be observed, completing carefully all that he undertook to do, yielded at last to the pressing solicitations of his father and returned to Florence.

Chapter III

In 1501 Michelangelo returned to Florence, where his early promise had been so cordially recognized by men of brilliant abilities and of the highest cultivation, and where the groundwork of his knowledge of art and literature had been laid with the advice and assistance of the best masters and most learned men of the time; for this great and original genius readily submitted to tuition and carefully followed the path of study then believed to be needful to the training of an artist. As has been related he learnt to draw under Domenico Ghirlandaio, acquiring at least a knowledge of first principles, he studied modelling and was taught to chisel marble under the direction of Bertoldo, and whilst his choice of a profession was to be a Sculptor, he diligently studied the frescos of Masaccio and like all other artists of his time, drew inspiration from those great works.

It is remarkable that there should be no record of his pursuit of mathematics, scientific perspective or of architecture and or-

nament. Whatever knowledge he acquired of these branches of science and art, it does not appear to have been in early life when his whole attention was absorbed by the study of the human form, more exclusively it appears, than was usual with artists of the time. This undoubtedly sprang from his devotion to sculpture.

Michelangelo brought with him to Florence a greatly augmented reputation as the sculptor of the Cupid, the Bacchus and the Pietà, and it might reasonably be supposed, that, whilst commissions would flow in upon him, those who sought the aid of his skill would approach him with respect and confidence.

In the first contract, which was made after his return to Florence from Rome, on the part of Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini Cardinal Archbishop of Siena, distrust is expressed rather than confidence. It is stipulated amongst other conditions, that the statues should be better executed than was usually the case in Rome, and that if not satisfactory, they should be done over again. Pietro Torregiani, who had been previously employed, had left one statue only and that in an unfinished state, this Michelangelo was to complete and to bring into harmony with his own. [1]

The price to be paid for fifteen statues, which varied from about four feet in height to four feet six inches, was equal to about two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, to be advanced in certain ratios, according to the progress of the work. These statues were intended for the decoration of the family altar of the Piccolomini in the Cathedral of Siena.

From the nature of the contract it may be assumed, that these

[1] Michelangelo bound himself to execute fifteen Statues in three years for the sum of five hundred broad ducats, about L. 250 Stg. He was to pay all the expenses of marble or others which might arise. He was to receive an advance of one hundred ducats, and subsequently to be paid for each statue on completion, the sum of thirty three ducats and one third about L. 16 Stg. Gaetano Milanesi. Documents for the history of Sienese Art V. III, p. 19.

statues were regarded rather of a decorative character, than as works of high art to be executed by the Master himself, for they certainly appear to be the work of assistants. They are not well proportioned being only seven heads in height, so that they are squat and uninteresting, they are seen however to great disadvantage from the darkness of the church. They represent St Peter, St Paul, St Pius, St Gregory and St Francis, this last, which is the best of the series, is that which was commenced by Torregiani. It may have been finished by Michelangelo himself.

The next commission in point of date was that of the colossal statue of David, offered to Michelangelo by the officers of the works of the Cathedral of Florence on the sixteenth of August 1501.

A block of marble, eighteen feet in length, had lain for many years in a court attached to the office of works, originally intended to form part of a colossal statue to be executed by Agostino d'Antonio di Duccio, and placed at his disposal in 1464. This artist had successfully completed another colossus the year before, but he was not equally fortunate with his second commission, and not only failed, but made the block so unshapely, that sculptors generally held, that nothing could be made of it without the addition of other pieces of marble. It might reasonably be supposed, that in offering a commission to Michelangelo, especially for a statue to which was to be assigned a meaning expressive of the maintenance and defence of the national liberties — therefore a national work — marble would be provided, which would give the artist's genius free scope. It was not so. A deformed block was offered presenting many difficulties, by which however Michelangelo was not discouraged. He made several models, two of which still exist in the Buonarroti Museum at Florence, neither of them however being that

from which the statue was sculptured, but they are interesting as showing, that the misshapen block admitted of more, than one translation.

Michelangelo undertook to complete the colossal statue of David in two years, commencing from September 1501 and accepted as payment a sum equivalent to two pounds sixteen shillings a month.[1] As it was necessary to build a work-shop expressly, a convenient spot was selected near the Cathedral and a temporary erection, partly of stone partly of wood, was soon prepared, within which Michelangelo commenced the Colossus. Not as a modern sculptor would, with a full sized model, an ingenious apparatus to transfer its proportions to the marble, and skilful carvers to block it out and to carry it on till within a few touches of the chisel of completion, but alone in presence of the huge and awkward block, with chisels fashioned and tempered by himself.[2] How he worked, even when age had overtaken him, is admirably described by Vigenero, who knew him and had seen him at work.

« I have seen Michelangelo, although sixty years of age, and not one of the most robust of men, smite down more scales from a very hard block of marble in a quarter of an hour, than three young marble cutters would in three or four times that span, which must seem incredible to those, who have not seen it done! He flung himself upon the marble with such impetuosity and fervour, as to induce me to believe, that he would break the work into fragments. With a single blow he brought down scales of marble of three or four fingers breadth and with such precision to the line marked on the marble, that if he had broken away a very little more, he risked the ruin of his work. »

In January 1504 the statue, which Michelangelo commenced

[1] Six Florins in gold.

[2] Some Sculptors in Italy to this day sharpen and temper their own chisels. Probably because workmen are careless.

in September 1501, was finished. Such were the difficulties of his task, so unfit had the block been for free action on the part of the great sculptor, that the chiselling of Duccio remains on portions of the back, having penetrated to a depth, beyond which it was impossible to cut further without injury to the proportions of the figure. When the David was exhibited for the first time, it struck all those with wonder, who had seen the block of marble in the state in which it had been left, and it was said, « that a dead body had been raised to life. » [1] This statue marks the commencement of Michelangelo's second manner, and in it are seen the thoughts which agitated him, as he sculptured the Deliverer. It is far removed from his preceding works in its vigour and energy, and it expresses with a force, which can only be felt in its presence, the calm deliberation of a being, totally fearless and deeply conscious of what depends on the deed which he is about to do, as he gazes on his gigantic enemy, without a doubt of the coming end of the battle. In reply to the taunts of the Philistine he says. « I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts. » This is the moment selected by Michelangelo, and the trust and daring of the youth, who had slain the lion and the bear, and who now said to the enemy of his people, « I will smite thee and take thy head from thee » is expressed in every lineament of this noble statue. David is represented naked, having cast aside the armour offered him, he rests firmly on his right leg, which is magnificently formed, the left knee is advanced and the left foot touches the ground with an eager movement expressive of readiness for action. The beautiful body, full of life, strong and pliant, is slightly bent round, with the head turned to the enemy. The massive shoulders are thrown back, the right arm is pendent and the right hand grasps resolutely the stone with which the adversary

[1] Vasari, Ed. cit., V. XII., p. 173.

is to be slain. The left is bent upwards so as to bring the hand almost into contact with the shoulder. The sling is in this hand ready to receive the stone and to be transferred to the right. The noble head crowned with its mass of tangled locks turns on a neck like a tower, a neck never to be bent before a foe. The features are magnificent, the brows are knit, under them the resolute eyes measure the enemy, undismayed by his gigantic stature and brazen armour. The nostrils expand, but the breathing is calm, and the full firmly compressed lips convey the same impression as the other features, of deliberate inflexible courage. This noble creation so fraught with patriotic meaning, represents a beautiful youth of strong and active form, but the beauty is subordinated to the expression of force; the hands and feet seem somewhat large, but they are the hands and feet of the shepherd, who defended his flock from wild beasts, and his countrymen from the giant. There is no thought of the ideal of grace or dignity, but of heroic courage, and the forms are in harmony with this, which is the sentiment pervading the whole statue. In the admiration which this work of art excited, a Committee was appointed to decide, where it could most worthily be placed, every one in Florence considered specially capable of giving a sound opinion, being included in this Committee selected from every class of citizens. The list of names is singularly interesting for it contains Andrea della Robbia sculptor; Benedetto Buglione; Giovanni delle Corniole; Attavante; Messer Francesco, herald of the Signory; Francesco Monciatto, the carpenter; Giovanni Piffero; Lorenzo della Volpaia; Buonaccorso di Bartoluccio - nephew of Lorenzo Ghiberti, - Salvestro, jeweller; Cosimo Roselli; Guasparre di Simoni, goldsmith; Lodovico, goldsmith and master founder; Andrea il Riccio, goldsmith; Gallieno, embroiderer; David del Ghirlandaio, mosaicist; Simone del Pollaiuolo, called Cronaca; Filippino Lippi; Sandro

HEAD OF ST GEORGE
BY DONATELLO
HEAD OF DAVID
BY MICHELANGELO

PLATE 13.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

Botticelli; Giuliano and Antonio Sangallo; Andrea del Monte Sansovino; Chimenti del Tasso; Francesco Granacci; Biagio, the painter; Bernardo di Marco; Pier di Cosimo; Leonardo da Vinci; Pietro Perugino; Bernardo della Cecca; and Michelangelo, goldsmith (father of Bandinelli) a remarkable array of men of genius living at that time in Florence, and called together to assist the citizens in selecting a place for a public statue by Michelangelo.

If there be any excuse for not leaving the selection to the sculptor himself it is found in the choice of councillors. But they differed in opinion, some wishing to place the new statue under the arcade of the Loggia dei Lanzi, others on the terrace in front of the palace of the Signory, and this was finally decided upon, from deference to the opinion of Michelangelo himself. Here it stood from the year 1504, till it was removed in 1873 and taken to the Academy of the Fine Arts in Florence, where it is erected under cover. It may seem presumptuous to criticise the proposals of such a Committee, as that selected in 1504 and containing so many great names, but it appears obvious that if the statue of David had been placed under the Loggia, it would have injured the proportions of that beautiful building, whilst, as may be readily judged by the statues now there, it could only have been seen by cross and reflected lights. It is evident that a proper effect of chiaroscuro is essential to the favourable display of a work of sculpture; the beauties and merits can be brought out by this means only; if the statue is marble and is not placed in what artists call a good light, at even a short distance off it is seen only as a white mass, or as a dark mass if of bronze. The good old Tuscan sculptors have scant justice done to their productions whether in the open air or in the Churches, and the real merits of these admirable artists, cannot be properly appreciated, placed, as their works too frequently are, in bad lights.

On the first of April, 1504, the Office of Works of the Cathedral commissioned Michelangelo, assisted by others of practical skill,[1] to convey the statue of David from the place where it had been executed, to the palace of the Signory, and the Priors issued orders to their officials to give whatever aid was required for its safe transport. Consequently Simone del Pollaiolo, Antonio da Sangallo, Bartolomeo, the carpenter, and Bernardo della Cecca, deputies of the Priors volunteered their services. According to Vasari, Giuliano and Antonio da Sangallo or as related by Parenti, Simone del Pollaiuolo invented the frame for its support and the contrivances for its safe removal.

« On the fourteenth of May the giant of marble was dragged from the Office of Works at the hour of twenty-four, part of the wall over the entrance being broken down to allow it to pass. As it rested that evening ready for its further progress next day, malicious people[2] flung stones at it to injure it, so that it was necessary each night to set a guard over it. It went very slowly, being bound in an upright position so that it swung freely. With much ingenuity and trouble it was thus in four days conveyed to the piazza, which it reached at noon on the eighteenth. »[3]

The pedestal for the statue was designed by Pollaiuolo and Antonio Sangallo. It is not specified, why this was not left to Michelangelo, but at this time it is evident that he was not thought of as an architect; he could not, however untrained, have invented anything more common place, than the production of the united architects.

[1] Gaye, V. II, p. 464.

[2] « It was guarded in the night time. Some young fellows assaulted the guards and struck the statue with stones to injure it. They were recognized and imprisoned. » MS. Florentine History by Marco Parenti. Magliabechian Library.

[3] The distance is about a quarter of a mile.

The statue being placed, Michelangelo gave it its last touches, and it was whilst so occupied, that as is asserted, the Gonfaloniere Soderini's famous criticism of the nose, and Michelangelo's equally famous presence of mind occurred. The story is probably untrue, and the malevolent attempt to make Soderini the type of a foolish critic was ungrateful and unjust. He was a fervent and enlightened promoter of fine art, and the respected friend of the greatest artists of the time.[1]

The great work of art, thus finally placed in front of the palace of the Signory, was not the only one, which occupied the time of Michelangelo at this period. A few days after it was erected, his contract with Cardinal Piccolomini was confirmed on the fifteenth of September by his heirs, and was formally ratified upon the fifteenth of February following. By this deed it appears that at this date five statues had been delivered, they were therefore carried on simultaneously with the David, which confirms the criticism already made, that they were probably the work of assistants. It was further stated that the sculptor had been paid for them and that an advance of one hundred crowns had been made in addition. An extension of time was conceded, and it was stipulated that if in consequence of the war with Pisa, the Florentine Republic should change the course of the Arno, and so interrupt the usual intercourse with Carrara, additional time should be allowed. This wicked and preposterous scheme never was carried out, and the way to Carrara was not interrupted by this means, but Michelangelo nevertheless did not proceed with the remaining statues. In 1537 Anton Maria Piccolomini

[1] In 1527 the left arm was broken in three places and thrown to the ground by a stone cast from above during a popular tumult. The three pieces were gathered up by George Vasari and Francis del Salviati, and were carried to the house of Salviati's father, by whom they were subsequently given to Duke Cosmo de' Medici, who caused them to be replaced and fixed with copper pins. The populace watching the erection of the necessary scaffold speculated on its object, some said that it was to mend the broken arms, but others thought that it was to wash his face. Archives of the State, Florence. *Carteggio universale* de' Granduchi. 363 and 419.

heir of Pius III, ceded his claims against Michelangelo for one hundred crowns to Oliviero de' Panciatichi of Pistoia.

On the twelfth of August 1504 the Gonfaloniere of Florence had special reasons for offering a new commission to Michelangelo.[1] Political motives induced the Government to propose the gift of a statue to Marshal de Giè, who had promoted the interests with the French King, and this statue Michelangelo was requested to model. It was to be another David, but on a smaller scale, and was to be cast in bronze. Michelangelo was overwhelmed with commissions at this period, and although earnestly pressed to execute this statue, he made slow progress. In the meanwhile the Marshall fell out of Royal favour, whereupon the Signory changed their minds, and when it was at last completed at a subsequent period they presented it to the Treasurer Robertet, who accepted it, but commented with severity upon the conduct of the donors to his predecessor in office. It was packed and despatched in 1508, and this was quaintly notified as follows. « The David in the name of God is packed and sent as far as the port of Signa » a landing place on the Arno, six miles below Florence, between the mouths of the Bisenzio and the Ombrone. Finally the statue reached M. Robertet and was placed by him in his castle at Blois. It afterwards passed into the hands of the king, and is now unfortunately lost. Michelangelo only made the model for this statue, which was probably cast by Benedetto da Rovezzano.

The energy with which Michelangelo worked is illustrated by the fact, that, whilst occupied with the colossal David, besides the statues for the Piccolomini, he commenced and carried a certain length a statue of the Apostle Mathew, and two circular reliefs of the Virgin and child. One of these very fine sketches in marble, for so they may appropriately be called, exists in the

[1] Gaye.

national museum of Florence. The head of the Virgin, which is nearly completed, is singularly beautiful in form and expression. The other work is in the possession of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts London. The statue of St Mathew, now in the Royal Academy of fine arts Florence, where it can be freely and easily seen, formed part of a commission to execute twelve statues of Apostles to be placed, as specified in the contract dated the twenty-fourth April 1503, « in Sta Maria del Fiore, the Cathedral of Florence, where there are pictures by Ricci di Lorenzo, which statues are to be finished in twelve years at the expense of the Office of Works, whether for the expense of marble, for journeys to Carrara, or living for the artist and an assistant. »[1] He was to be paid besides about nineteen shillings and two pence sterling a month, twelve pounds ten shillings a year for twelve years, and as much more as might seem good to the Office. A house was expressly built at the cost of the same Office in the Borgo Pinti with workshops for the execution of the statues. The designer of this house was Cronaca, and it may be remarked that, although specially intended for Michelangelo, he evidently was not yet considered an architect either by himself or others, or he surely would have designed his own Studio, even although Cronaca was one of the official architects of the Board.

With every allowance for the difference in the valne of money, it is not easy to understand how Michelangelo could bind himself for twelve years for such a stipend, not only far beneath his merits and position, but inferior to the prices which he had received from private employers. For his group of the Pietà he received a sum equivalent to two hundred and twenty-five pounds Stg. and although obliged to defray both marble and rent, it is evident that it was paid for at a much higher rate, than the proposed statues for the Cathedral. Such prices suggest that

[1] Vasari, V. XII, p. 343.

with regard to certain commissions, Michelangelo contemplated the employment of pupils or assistants, reserving himself for other and more important orders.

Be this as it may, the Board of Works, Florentine like, had driven too hard a bargain. One only of the twelve statues was commenced and partially blocked out, after which nothing more was done. Abandoned in the court of the Office of Works, it lay there for centuries, till it was erected where it now is in 1834, and an inscription to the following effect written by Giovanni Battista Nicolini was placed under it.

« This image of St Mathew, shadowed forth by Michelangelo, lay for a long time in the court of the works of Sta Maria del Fiore, and in 1834 was transferred to this Academy of the Fine Arts, named after the Apostle, for the instruction of Sculptors, and all may admire the puissant fantasy of that divine genius, who first in modern times raised art from the material to the ideal. Here the chisel liberated from the marble the figure, which the intellect had already created. »

The statue thus described is only partially liberated. As now seen, covered with the dirt of ages, it suggests a petrified primeval man, who has died in agony in some convulsion of nature. It is of colossal size, and is the first example of that embodiment of energetic momentary action, which was in future to characterize so many of Michelangelo's works. As an example of his mode of working it is instructive. The markings of the broad toothed chisels, held to and pressed against the marble till driven forward several inches by repeated blows of the mallet, are perceptible flowing over the surface, like the hatchings with the point with which a skilful draughtsman searches out form and expresses it.

These marble statues, so says the contract, were to take the place of painted figures of the apostles, an interesting remark as

showing, that the medieval interior of the Cathedral was painted or intended to be so. The great flat surfaces, thin mouldings and string courses of that now heavy and expressionless interior, show that its architect chiefly trusted to colour for its decoration, and that he meant it to be as universally painted within as the upper church of St Francis at Assisi. It is quite possible that much of this colour was actually executed, but the later Florentines have almost entirely destroyed the works of their ancestors by tasteless restorations, and the interior of Santa Maria del Fiore has especially suffered from prevalent ignorance and bad taste. There is a lull for the present, in these proceedings, and restoration is now limited to that which Tuscan Artists understand and execute well, the exterior mosaic and inlay, but the interior is hopelessly injured.

Between Michelangelo's return to Florence in 1501 and the year 1504, his commissions amounted to thirty-seven statues and reliefs of different sizes. This multitude of orders to be soon followed by others of still greater importance, explains how it was that he could only execute a portion of them, and did not even complete those which he commenced and carried to a certain length.

So much has been said and written of Michelangelo's solitary work, that it has become an article of faith, like many others to disappear before inquiry. It will be seen that Michelangelo, like other artists of his time, availed himself of the help of assistants and that he contemplated an extensive employment of sculptors on the works, which he undertook. He saw perfectly that he could not execute his numerous commissions alone, and that he did not mean to do so is proved by his actions, letters, and other documents. It may be doubted however whether he was able to organize an efficient corps of assistants. He was difficult to please, and although generous and kind, not unfre-

[illegible] had he been more fortunate in his dealings [illegible] a great deal of work would have been [illegible] by Lionardo and Michelangelo. As it is, there are not so [illegible] and not a few of more undoubted, but the greater part of these are by the same hands.

It would seem that about this time or a little later he painted a picture for Agnolo Doni. It is now in the Tribune of the Florentine Gallery in a very bad light.[1] Its marvellous perfection of finish combined with breadth and a monumental simplicity of manner, indicate an amount of technical skill which, were the picture by any other hand than Michelangelo, would be only attainable by long and continued practice, of which in this case there is no record. This picture undoubtedly is in oil, and it may be remarked that the artist whose method it most closely resembles, in the painting especially of the flesh, is Lorenzo di Credi; but otherwise it is unlike contemporary art whether in force of colour, or style of painting. Michelangelo in this work seems to have ignored the progress made by his great Master and compeers, above all by Lionardo da Vinci, in improved methods of handling and effect of colour and chiaroscuro, and to have reverted to the primitive manner of the old Florentines, in which, as in the miniature illuminations of the same and of earlier times, the shadows are painted with the pure unmixed local colour, and the gradations from shadow to half tint and from half tint to light are made simply by the addition of white in increasing and graduated quantities, till frequently the lights become entirely white. A technical consequence of this primitive system is the necessary loading of the shadows with the unmixed colour, which, being transparent, is laid on very thickly

[1] It was taken down and placed in a clear light for my inspection by the obliging permission of the Cavaliere Giorgio Campani, the accomplished official Inspector of the Museums and Galleries of Florence, who is so excellent a judge of art. I therefore examined this picture closely. That it is an oil painting, there can be no doubt whatever.

to attain the requisite force. Such is the case in this picture and as is usual in all executed in the same way, the surface of the shadows is higher than that of the lights, and the loaded paint is cracked.

Whilst thus primitive in method and scale of colour, this picture advances beyond all contemporary art in the power with which it is drawn, with the exception of that of Lionardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo manifests in it the remarkable, even fantastic pose of the human figure so frequently characteristic of his composition, which besides in this picture is rather that of sculpture, than of the sister art of painting.

St Joseph is represented sitting on a very low seat on a terrace bounded by a wall, the cope of which crosses the picture behind him. He holds his knees so far apart, that he could not maintain the position for any time without pain, and between them, with her back turned towards him, the Virgin sits on the ground, her limbs drawn up together to the right, whilst she twists herself round to receive the Holy Child, which St Joseph reverentially holds over her right shoulder. A remarkable circumstance in this picture is the apparent age of the Madonna, who evidently has been painted from a plain, somewhat muscular and scraggy Tuscan peasant woman above thirty years of age.

The idea which guided the artist in his production of the beautiful and youthful virgin mother of the Pietà is here entirely absent, for in this picture she is almost forbiddingly plain. The infant Saviour is beautiful, as with a gentle but grave smile he looks on his mother. The drapery in this picture, especially of the Virgin, if compared with that of the Madonna of Bruges, shows similarity of treatment, and is so far sculpturesque; yet at the same time the identity in the disposition of the folds, — which are in parts sharp and angular, in parts conventional and ornamental — with draperies in pictures by Dom-

enico Ghirlandaio is very observable, especially where a portion of a garment lies on the ground in flat mannered folds — a medieval traditional treatment — the resemblance between the style and ideas of the two Masters is very close. When it is remembered that Michelangelo remained but one year in the studio of Ghirlandaio, his appropriation of his Master's peculiarities of style in the arrangement and representation of drapery, supports the statements of his biographers regarding his astonishing progress in study. That he should have so fixed them in his mind, as to reproduce them in works of his maturity, so that they can be recognised notwithstanding the larger and grander manner resulting from his infinitely higher conceptions of form and his incomparably greater power of drawing, is an interesting proof of his careful study in youth.

The interesting picture of the Tribune presents throughout evidence of labour and of a certain cold perfection of finish, the results apparently of painting in oil for the first time. That he should have executed the picture so perfectly, is a testimony to his extraordinary powers, for to whatever branch of art he gave his attention, he sooner or later mastered its details and conquered its practical difficulties; but that he should have painted it in oil without previous practice in that difficult method, is not more wonderful, than that he should have overcome the still greater difficulties of fresco painting in the Sixtine without previous training.

In the middle distance of the Tribune picture is the row of naked men standing against or sitting on a bank of precipitous rock, which has excited so much speculation and has been accounted for in so many ways. There is a circular picture by Luca Signorelli in the Florence Gallery representing a seated Madonna and infant Saviour, in a landscape with four finely drawn naked figures in the middle distance, and near them a

white horse feeding. Luca exibited his skill in representing the human form, wherever he could create the opportunity. These peasants in his picture represent the inhabitants of the country, the Madonna and child being the foreground figures. The composition is a primitive conception of genre painting and thought.

As Michelangelo's picture exhibits the same idea, it is possible that he saw Signorelli's, and that it pleased him, for in a similar manner he has peopled the middle distance with nude peasants, admirably drawn, full of life and movement, and painted with great skill. In front of the peasants St John Baptist is partly seen, he is coming to pay a visit, and is plain to ugliness. The foreground and distance show an entire ignorance of painting landscape, even as then understood by artists. It is simply poor imperfect work, and shows that up to this time he had not studied the subject.

This remarkable picture is a perfect type in composition, colour and imperfection in the landscape details of background, of the frescos of the Sixtine; it proves that his ideas of colour in monumental art were fixed, before he began to paint in Rome, and that whatever his motives for then employing artists to assist him, it certainly could not have been « to teach him how to colour his cartoons. » As Vasari states.

It is probable that few observers sympathize with the principles of colour, which this picture illustrates. They are out of place in a work of art, which is not monumental, but rather domestic in its composition, and their conventionalism displeases even those, who are unable to account for their dissatisfaction. If it be pointed out that these principles are those carried out to their full extent in the monumental frescos of the Sixtine, the picture acquires a new interest and cannot fail to be studied with profound attention. It exercised a great in-

fluence upon contemporary artists. To a certain extent it arrested progress in the direction of rich harmonious colouring and forcible chiaroscuro, substituting a conventional method and neglect of the study of nature. This is exemplified in the pictures of Vasari and Alessandro Allori, whose « Annunciation » in the Florence Gallery is a manifest imitation in colour of this picture of Michelangelo. Many other examples might be pointed to, but happily this cold formal style of colour did not live long, and succumbed before the vigourous naturalism of painters, amongst whom Cigoli was a leader.

When the picture was finished and sent to Doni for whom it was painted, true to Florentine instincts he cheapened it. He does not seem to have understood the character of the man he was dealing with. Michelangelo in the course of the discussion which ensued, compelled him to pay twice the price originally asked, or to return the picture. [1]

In modern times this picture, like most of those in Florence by the great Masters, has been very ill used, having been first overcleaned and then varnished with a dark brown thick varnish, coarsely and unequally applied. Remarks therefore on its tone of colour must be considered in relation to this fact. The picture may once have been enriched with glazings, which were largely made use of by the old Florentine Masters, and have been as persistently swept away by their worthless descendants the Florentine picture cleaners, who have dared not only thus to treat, but extensively to repaint the finest pictures in the world with their vile handiwork.

Other pictures have been attributed to Michelangelo in Italy and elsewhere, but on being carefully compared with his known works, they are now set aside as by followers. One of the feeblest of these fictitious Michelangelos is the entombment in the

[1] The price asked was seventy ducats, about thirty three pounds thirteen shillings Stg.

National Gallery London. It is indeed extraordinary that this picture should ever have been attributed to so great a master, there are but two figures in it which have some resemblance to his design, but in an imperfect and unsatisfactory manner.

As the head of the old man behind the dead body, is a weak imitation of the head of Joseph in the picture in the Tribune, therefore this composition must have been painted at a later period, which increases the difficulty of believing it to be by Michelangelo. The strange and gaunt bearer with one leg, to the left of the dead body, strongly resembles the design of Pontormo; this figure is marked by the ugly features, thin form, feeble outline observable in that artists work. He painted frequently from cartoons by Michelangelo, without taste or inspiration, thus the dead Christ is after a fine drawing of somewhat unequal merit by Michelangelo. The expression of death, admirably rendered in the drawing, is quite absent in the picture. The Christ has evidently been painted from a living model, for the body seems inflated by breath.[1]

The triangle formed by the legs of the dead body and the solitary leg of the left hand bearer, may be instanced as a case of bad composition, impossible in a work of Michelangelo, but quite characteristic of Pontormo, as are the unfinished figures of women with meagre ill drawn arms on either side of the pic-

[1] The figure, of the dead Christ in the drawing is that of a dead man held or propped up, dead only a few hours before the rigor mortis has set in. Hence the muscles are not rigid, and the dead body falls into a position regulated by gravity. The arms are pendent and drawn down, the clavicles and the anatomical details of the neck are indicated by the hand of a Master. The pectoral is affected by the pendent position of the arms. The drawing of the lower part of the torso is very fine, showing that the subject died fasting, in physical suffering, and that the last act was inspiration. The fore arms are indifferently drawn. The right hand is not that of a dead person, the lower extremities from the knee downwards are very poor. *Remarks by Dr Fleichman,* Florence. It seems probable that the body is by Michelangelo, the other parts added by some one else. The figure in the picture is wholly inferior. And the torso is not that of a dead person, it is swollen, in fact misses altogether the expression so admirably rendered in the drawing by a master hand. The author of the picture has departed from the drawing, just as a weak draughtsman would, in form and expression.

ture; these especially are so defective in design and style that they cannot be attributed to Michelangelo with any feeling of respect for his memory.

The admirable unfinished picture of a Madonna and Child, with St John and other figures in the same gallery, is the most interesting, as it is the best of the unrecorded works now ascribed to Michelangelo. As, notwithstanding the minuteness with which his pictures are described by his biographers, there is no mention of this one, it must depend upon internal evidence for its authenticity; on its composition, drawing, types of faces, and treatment of drapery.

Imperfect ideas of perspective are observable, the figures are intended to be on different planes but the relative positions of the feet indicate this in a confused way, this however does not weaken its claim to be considered an early picture by Michelangelo. The faces are from purely Tuscan models, the artists ideal is not yet formed and there is a close and pleasing adherence to the nature which he saw daily. The drapery although in somewhat tormented folds is characterized by a vigour and grandeur of style very suggestive of the handling and ideas of Michelangelo. The picture is full of noble promise.

The departure which is apparent in this picture, from the usual principles of composition common at the time in similar subjects and its sculpturesque character, are in favour of its pretensions. Although quite unlike Tuscan painting of the time, it is like Tuscan sculpture. In the two children, and in the two young men to the left of the Virgin there is so strong a reminiscence of Donatello and Luca Della Robbia, although less of the latter than the former, that we are reminded of the fact that Michelangelo was a pupil of Bertoldo, and a follower of Donatello, and it is reasonable to infer that this picture was painted, whilst he was under this influence. The drapery, as

[illegible] AND CHILD
WITH ST JOHN AND OTHER FIGURES
EARLY PICTURE.

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well as general composition, are in harmony with this criticism, the imperfections are such as would be present in the picture of a young sculptor, especially the absence of a recognition of pictorial planes. The convolutions of the drapery on the back of the child Christ represent a peculiarity of Michelangelo's drawing of drapery at all times, although exaggerated in this early picture. It does not seem likely that it could have been painted when he lived with Lorenzo the Magnificent, for if so, it could not have escaped record, but it may have been so when he returned to his father's house, the history of which period is rather bare of detail.

It recalls the bas-relief of his boyhood now in the Casa Buonarroti, in its introduction of accessory figures not easily understood, and in the style of drapery, but it is much better than that juvenile work.

The hair of the different figures especially merits attention; and whilst much less perfect, than that of the figures of the Sixtine, and with less sense of chiaroscuro, it is still very similar in treatment.

Generally speaking this picture is inferior to the beautiful angel on the altar of St Domenic at Bologna, which exhibits maturer powers, therefore, if by Michelangelo, which seems so probable, it has been painted before he was twenty years of age.

Condivi mentions a Madonna cast in bronze as being of the busy period included in this chapter, and Vasari misrepresenting Condivi's statement describes it as a circular bas-relief; both biographers assert that this work was purchased by Flemish merchants called Moscheroni, who conveyed it to Flanders. If any Madonna was at this time executed in bronze, it has been lost, or Condivi must have forgotten that the fine group purchased by the Flemish merchants and now at Bruges is of marble.

After the purchase it was forwarded by Francesco del Pugliesi from Florence to Bruges by way of Via Reggio in August or September 1506, according to instructions to that effect given by Giovanni Balducci of Rome on the part of the heirs of John and Alexander Moscheroni.

In October 1504, that eventful year in the career of Michelangelo, he received from the Municipality of Florence a commission to execute a national picture on one of the walls of the great Municipal Hall, in which Lionardo da Vinci had previously been employed. This commission bestowed and accepted with unhesitating confidence, proves that he was not deterred by the fame and skill of the great painter, with whom he was thus brought into direct comparison.

The Gonfaloniere Pietro Soderini is alluded to by Condivi as Michelangelo's attached friend, and he was also the intimate of Lionardo da Vinci. Thus he was associated with the two most renowned artists of his time, and he lost no opportunity, wherever his influence extended, of giving them employment in a manner, as honourable to them as to himself.

The idea that the Hall in which the Municipal Council held its sittings should be adorned with mural paintings of patriotic subjects by Da Vinci and Michelangelo, was due to Pietro Soderini, and he gave the first commission for one of these to the former, in the beginning of February 1504, who at once commenced the drawing and composition of the necessary cartoon. He selected for his subject the battle of Anghiari won by the Florentines in 1440 over Niccolò Piccinino, Captain under Duke Filippo Maria Visconti, thus saving Florence from falling under the power of her implacable enemy.

This was Leonardo's second opportunity of executing a mural painting of importance. The first was the famous representation of the « Last Supper » painted in the refectory of the Domin-

ican Convent close to Sta Maria delle Grazie at Milan, between 1494 and 1497. Incomparably the finest picture of the fifteenth century, now unhappily but a wreck of what it once was.

The Cartoon for his Florentine work was completed in April 1505, thus occupying about fourteen months. It was regarded with wonder and admiration, and Lionardo losing no time, so soon as it was finished began the picture on the wall. It appears that Lionardo either did not understand or did not like fresco painting, for he executed his grand work at Milan in oil colours, and he made up his mind at Florence to restore the method of the ancients — as described by Pliny — if we may form a judgment of the process by the descriptions given of his experiments. He first tried his proposed method upon a small scale, and having applied heat to the picture was satisfied with the results. This application of heat clearly indicates that he aimed at the revival of encaustic painting. Encouraged by the success of his first attempt, he coloured the battle of Anghiari from his cartoon upon the wall assigned to him, and finished it in less than five months.

The comparative rapidity with which the picture was painted is in entire accordance with the time usually occupied by the great Masters in the execution on the wall of their most important works. They expended much more upon the preparation of the sketches, the studies from nature, and in maturing their compositions on the Cartoons, than on the final work, and usually finished the painting with a celerity which was marvellous, especially when compared with the slow procedure of modern days.

Although there is no exact record of Lionardo's method of painting, it is evident that he used wax with a solvent, and no doubt a gum to harden the mixture, for when he had finished the painting, he applied heat by lighting fires upon the floor.

Here was the defective part of his plan. A small picture had been easily heated equally, whilst the lower parts only of the large mural picture were affected by the fire. That the heat might also reach the upper portions, fuel was heaped on, and the result was that the wax melted in the lower extremity making the colours run to the artist's deep mortification. [1]

The noble mural picture thus elaborated with so much care and devotion of time, from a defect in the process adopted manifested even before it was publicly exhibited, rapidly decayed, and within fifty years, notwithstanding every effort for its preservation, perished. Or possibly Vasari, who did not love Lionardo, might have been able to account for the final disappearance of this work, replaced by his cold and pedantic frescos. Vasari spared not the works of his predecessors. He describes Bramante as a destroyer, but he was himself equally so.

The copies or other records which remain of the great work of Lionardo, possess a certain interest as preserving some idea of his general design, but they are obviously deficient in that taste and refinement combined with energy and life, which must have been characteristic of any great design by mim.

For instance, that by Rubens has a Flemish clumsiness and vulgarity about it, which never could exist in a work by the great Italian.

Michelangelo commenced his rival cartoon in October 1504 [2] and carried it on apparently without interruption till Jan-

[1] The old accounts of the method of painting adopted by Da Vinci are imperfect and confused. Modern research into the nature of encaustic painting make it easier to explain his method so far, but neither he nor later inquirers have discovered the true secret of encaustic painting. No system known from the days of Cimabue or earlier to the present time can rival in durability the ancient method. The paintings in Pompeii buried in damp soil for so many centuries are found to be as brilliant, probably as when painted, those painted in the same way in Herculaneum are found on walls, the wooden beams of which are reduced to charcoal by fervent heat, yet the pictures have hardly suffered. A few weeks of such damp and far less than volcanic heat would obliterate all the frescos, tempera or oil pictures of the last five centuries.

[2] There are two slight sketches, first ideas in outline for groups of figures in this composition, which are preserved in the Florence Gallery.

uary 1505; shortly after which time he was invited to go to Rome by Pope Julius the second.

Giuliano della Rovere was elected supreme Pontiff in October 1503 on the death of Pius III. The pontificate of Julius II famous in history, is equally, if not more so in the annals of art. He loved it and distinguished artists with his favour and personal friendship. He was gifted with imagination, and his projects in art, like those of his policy, were characterised by daring and grandeur of idea. He strove « to expel the barbarians from Italy, » and he planned the new church of St Peter, commissioned the painting of the vault of the Sixtine by Michelangelo and of the Stanze of the Vatican by Raffael, and on his monument sits the statue of Moses, which he ordered, and which is incomparably the greatest work of modern sculpture.

The invitation of Julius to Michelangelo to visit him in Rome was an event of singular importance in the artist's life; so much so, that a vivid curiosity is aroused as to the nature of the motives, which induced him to accept it. The bald narratives of Vasari and Condivi do not satisfy this curiosity; they evidently both err as to the date of his leaving Florence, which Michelangelo himself had forgotten, when in 1542 he wrote « in the first year of the election of Julius, who commissioned the sepulchre, I remained eight months at Carrara »[1] Now this took place not in 1503, when Julius was elected, but in 1505.

No explanation is given, why Michelangelo abandoned his noble commission to paint the Hall of the Signory, leaving incomplete the cartoon in which he manifestly intended to show all his powers of design and to excel the great artist with whom he had been placed in honourable competition, nor why he left his other engagements and a city where he was so honoured and so certain of permanent employment, and where apparently

[1] See letter of Michelangelo published by S. Campi.

he was so happy. Florence also was at the time a more active centre of the arts than Rome; many more eminent artists lived in it and found employment, and the number, variety and dignity of Michelangelo's commissions could hardly be excelled. But Rome then as now, exercised a fascinating power on the minds of artists, and Julius, who wished to surround himself with the greatest then living, must have desired especially to secure the services of Michelangelo, whose reputation cannot have been otherwise than well known to him.

It is probable that he made him magnificent offers, that of a hundred crowns to pay his expenses might be considered princely, when the usual cost of a journey from Florence to Rome was considered.

It is possible that Michelangelo may have considered this provision a pledge of the honours with which he was to be received, and of the munificent employment which awaited him.

In January or February 1505 he went to Rome, leaving in Florence many unfulfilled commissions and many regrets on the part of his friends, amongst whom was the generous and estimable Piero Soderini, who had given so many proofs of his regard, and now lamented his departure and the stoppage of his great work for the Hall of the ancient Municipal Palace.

Chapter IV

The Biographers of Michelangelo relate, that after his arrival in Rome at the commencement of the year 1505 many months passed before the Pope made up his mind, how to employ him. This cannot be true, for in April he proceeded to Carrara to purchase marble for the monument of Julius, who, like the Pharaohs of old, resolved that the first great work of art of his reign should be his Sepulchre. He must have given very precise instructions and have expressed himself very fully and confidentially, for there were parts of the design, which otherwise would not have presented themselves to the artist's mind.

Michelangelo prepared a sketch, which may, or may not be that preserved in the collection of drawings by the old Masters in the Florentine Gallery. This drawing, executed with a reed pen and slightly shaded with bistre, has a special interest as an example of his ideas at that time of architectural design. As might be expected, the architecture is a mere frame work for

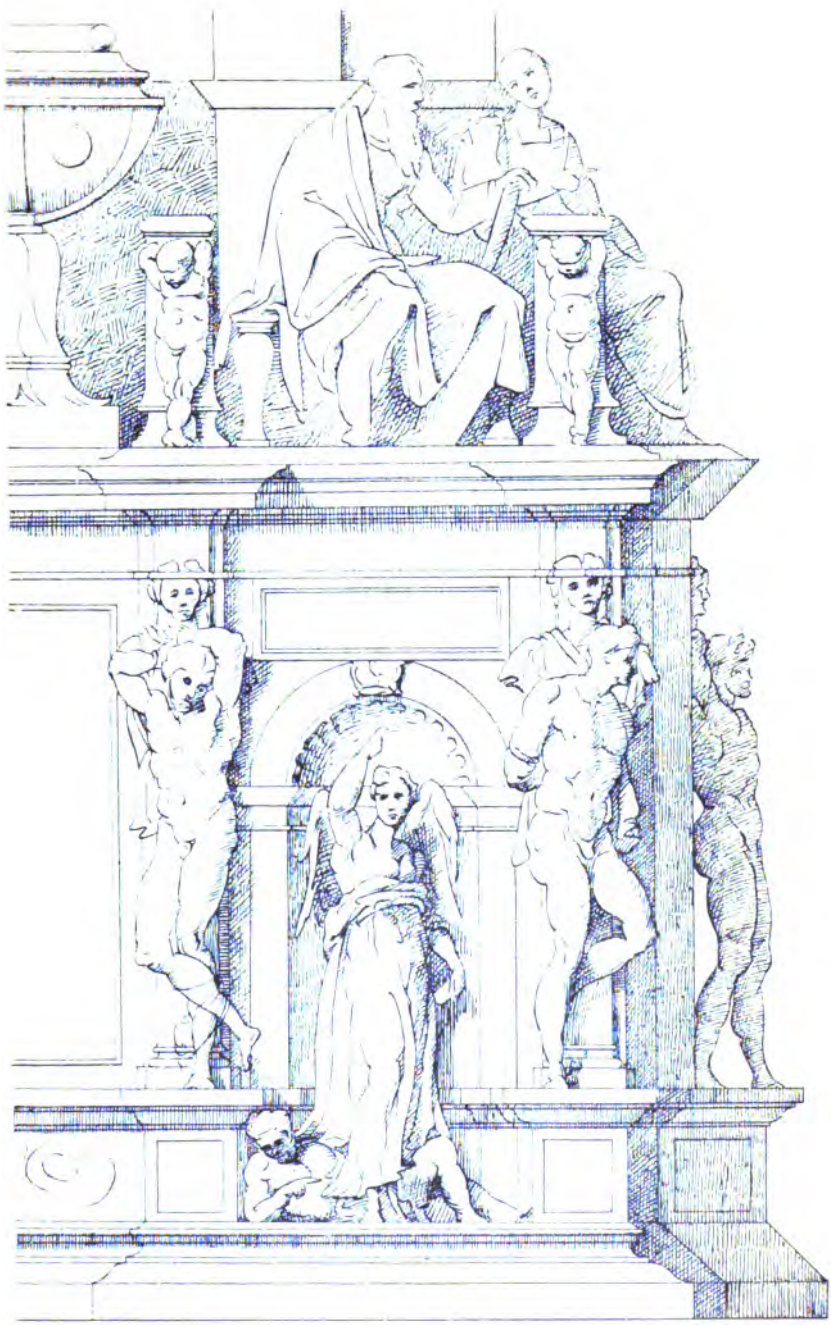
the sculpture, and it would be unreasonable to criticise the heavy and inelegant forms, for they are evidently unstudied. The existing monument in San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome shows that the main features of the lower portion of the design were preserved to the last, notwithstanding the changes which were made in the groups of sculpture, with which it was to have been decorated.

The statements of Condivi and Vasari, although they differ in various respects as to the purpose of the statues and err with regard to the number, throw some light on their meaning. The monument was intended to be built in two stages, and to be isolated, that is, free all round from the walls of the Church.

The flanks were to be thirty-four feet six inches (English) in length, and the ends were to be twenty-three feet wide. The lower stage was to stand upon a socle with base and upper mouldings continued on all sides, and this socle was to project at regular intervals into pedestals. Above these were to rise Terminal figures, to support the cornice, which was to break into projections and recesses at the same intervals as the pedestals.

Betwixt the Terminal figures, which were to be four in number at each end, there were to be two niches, one between each pair, and in the central space a large relief in bronze.

Upon the platform a shrine was to be erected to contain the Sarcophagus of the Pope. The sketch represents the upper part of the monument too imperfectly to suggest any description of its real nature, but it shows clearly the proposed arrangement of the sculpture. In front of the Terminal figures were to stand statues of captives, which, according to Condivi, were to represent the liberal arts « as Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, each with its attributes so as to be easily recognized and symbolizing that with Pope Julius, all were the prisoners of death never again to find any one to favour and nourish them like him. »



SKETCH FOR THE MONUMENT
OF JULIUS II

PLATE 6.

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Condivi seems to overlook the fact that there must have been sixteen liberal arts, as there were to be sixteen pedestals in the design. In the niches there were to be figures of Victory treading upon others representing conquered provinces. Julius must have confided to Michelangelo his future policy, and have had no doubt of its success, for the design was made before war was declared, and provision was made in it for victories over ten provinces. Upon the platform and perpendicular to the terminal figures, pedestals with statues of Boy Angels were to be placed and possibly a bronze railing or ballustrade between them. Within these pedestals, but outside the shrine were to be four sitting figures at one end, and the same number must have been contemplated at the other end, but four only are described by Condivi to represent the Prophet Moses, the Apostle St Paul and Active and Contemplative life. The statue of the dead Pontiff is not described, but there was to be an Angel on each side of the sarcophagus. One weeping for the death of the Pontiff the other rejoicing in the addition made to the heavenly host. Condivi says that the entire monument was to contain forty statues; but the drawing indicates many more, not less in fact than seventy-eight.

There is no trace in this stupendous invention of the touching and religious feeling with which the monuments of the dead were previously designed and executed. The strain of tender and christian sentiment, which guided men from the days of the catacombs to the end of the fifteenth century was broken, and whatever the ability with which the monument would have been realized — and, no doubt, every portion of it would have proved a mighty work of art — still it must he regarded as the first example, of a long series of monstrous monuments, since erected in every part of Europe, utterly devoid of any true christian ideal, hiding hopes of the future under the commemoration of

a worldly past, preserving the memories of pride passion and rivalry, so that the completion either has been opposed, as was the case with this monument, or if erected, they were frequently cast down by antagonists, when their turn of power came. Indeed monuments of this class now remaining are regarded rather with pity and distaste, than with any other feeling, hiding, as they often do, real merit, or commemorating incapacity under forms of foolish allegory.

The design being completed to the satisfaction of the Pope, Michelangelo was provided with money and set out for Carrara to purchase and convey to Rome the necessary blocks of marble; but the plan for the monument of Julius was on such a scale, that the church of St Peter as it then existed, offered no appropriate site for it within its walls. A new apse devised by Nicholas the fifth, had been carried up to a height of about six feet, when the death of that Pontiff occurred and it was discontinued. Giuliano da Sangallo and Bramante being consulted on the provision of a site for the sepulchre, proposed to complete the apse commenced by Nicholas, but Julius was animated by very different ideas and resolved to pull down St Peters and to rebuild it. He immediately ordered designs to be prepared by several architects, from which he selected that by Bramante. It is stated that he was led to this decision by the favourable opinion, which Michelangelo expressed of that design, but as he departed for Carrara in April, it seems very improbable that the architects could have prepared drawings for so important an edifice, in so short a time as that which elapsed between the decision regarding the monument, the subsequent consultation, and the departure for Carrara. It is however quite certain that Michelangelo entertained a very high opinion of the plan by Bramante, which he expressed at a much later period of his life, notwithstanding all that he suffered from the enmity of that

architect. From his statement it appears that, according to it, the church stood quite free from the Vatican, and could be seen all round, and so highly did Michelangelo appreciate this proposal, that he expressed his opinion that all who had departed from it had erred in principle, and that Bramante was as skilful as any architect who had lived from the time of the ancients. [1]

Michelangelo remained for eight months at Carrara, and how his time was employed then may be gathered from expressions scattered through the writings of different authors and commentators, as well as from his own letters. It is in the first place obvious that in giving instruction for the quarrying of blocks of marble, he must have previously prepared working drawings of his designs, from which the blocks were te be cut.

According to the contracts with the quarrymen the masses were partially cut into shape and Michelangelo himself blocked out two of the statues for his design. At a future page the subject of the occupation of the great artist's time at Carrara will be further considered, being both interesting and important. Whilst occupied in the vicinity of the marble quarries, a mass of rock commanding a view seawards attracted his attention, and he wished to carve it into a colossus to he seen by mariners. Its natural grandeur must have impressed him, but he saw it not as a portion of the magnificent scenery of the Carrara mountains, but only as material for a statue.

Towards the end of his stay, he went along the picturesque Riviera to Lavagna, a village of that name near the famous slate quarries, which furnish Genoa and the whole of Liguria with admirable slates, suitable for so many useful purposes, and there made a bargain with owners of vessels to transport thirty

[1] Buonarroti Archives. Published in the Lettere Pittoriche « Silvestri, Milan 1822, V. VI, p. 40.

four tons of marble to Rome, with two figures each weighing fifteen tons for the price of sixty two broad ducats in gold. The contract is dated the twelfth November 1505. He then started for Florence, and after a brief stay went to Rome, where he found the vessels in the Tiber with the marbles.

Michelangelo immediately gave orders for the landing of the blocks and their transport to a place not far from the Vatican and the church of St Peters, where the Pope had given instructions that a studio should be prepared, and here the marble was piled in such quantities that it seemed rather a temple than a monument, which was to be raised. The work commenced at Carrara was carried on energetically, architectural details being shaped out by carvers, whilst Michelangelo proceeded with the statues forming portions of his design. The Pope was in high spirits and he frequently visited the artist, to whom he became much attached, conversing with him as a friend of equal degree. To facilitate these visits, the studio being near the covered passage which leads from the Vatican to the Castle of St Angelo, a moveable bridge was constructed between it and Michelangelo's workshop. This mutual trust, and intimacy between the Pope and the great sculptor however was short lived, for Julius suddenly cooled as to the monument, which had so occupied his thoughts, and his demeanour towards Michelangelo changed. Bramante is accused of being the instigator of this, but it is to suppose him possessed of an influence over the mind of Julius, which is incredible. It is much more probable that the Pontiff, who was then considering a policy necessarily involving much outlay was awakened to the desirableness of less expenditure upon works of art. Vasari in fact states « that the mind of the Pope was so occupied with the affairs of Bologna, that he was unwilling to pay for marbles. » It is incontrovertible that the jealousy of Bramante was roused by the great

favour shewn to Michelangelo; it appears also that in his management of the works of St Peters now in progess, be misapplied the funds intrusted to him, and carelessly broke and otherwise injured the beautiful ancient columns which the old Church contained, and was at the same time aware that these circumstances had not escaped the observation of Michelangelo. Bramante therefore became the great sculptor's enemy, and his enmity ceased only with his life, but that it could turn, the firm, able, determined and clear sighted Julius from a purpose which be had formed, is obviously to attribute too much influence to the architect and to his representations. It is stated that he observed to the Pope « that it was of evil augury to begin his monument in his life time. » He may have said so, but it seems absurd te suppose that any importance was attached to this saying. It is next asserted that to injure Michelangelo Bramante proposed that be should be employed to paint the vault of the Cappella Sistina, being, so it is stated, under the belief that the sculptor would certainly fail in this undertaking and so lose the favour of the Pope. As there is no explanation of the grounds upon which the architect formed this opinion, if said at all, it must have been in ignorance of the powers of Michelangelo, and of his undertaking in the Hall of the Municipality of Florence.

The Pope's sudden change of conduct so affected Michelangelo that he resolved to leave Rome; a resolution which was confirmed and hastily acted upon, being alarmed by threats, which reached him, of personal danger to himself.

No sooner did the Pope learn that Michelangelo had fled, than regretting what had taken place to cause his departure, with his usual impetuosity he sent no less than five couriers after him with letters recalling him to Rome, but so expeditiously did Michelangelo ride, that he reached Poggibonsi on Florentine

territory before the couriers overtook him. This was an extraordinary escape and so resolute was his purpose, or so great his alarm, that he left orders to sell his furniture, which shows that he was in earnest and did not mean to return. He probably took the shortest road by the Ponte Molle and so by the Campagna to Ronciglione, thence across the monte Cimino to Montefiascone and skirting the lake of Bolsena onwards till he crossed the high pass of Radicofani, thence to Siena and finally to Poggibonsi, in a straight line, a ride of one hundred and thirty miles, with but little rest, as shewn by the fact that he was not caught by the fleet messengers of Julius. Michelangelo, when at last overtaken, was safe on Florentine territory and was neither moved by the representations of the Papal Couriers, nor by the missives of His Holiness, to whom be wrote in reply. « That he never would return, and that he did not deserve such treatment for his good and faithful service, or to be turned out like a sad fellow; and since His Holiness was indisposed to pay any further attention to the monument, he was freed from obligation, nor would he bind himself to anything else. » [1]

Having consigned this haughty response to one of the Couriers, he continued his journey to Florence, where he must have arrived about the end of April 1506.

Notwithstanding the nature of this answer, the Pope without loss of time made friendly advances to the irate artist through Giuliano da San Gallo. That His Holiness was displeased was natural, but notwithstanding the pressure upon his treasury caused by the preparations for the Bolognese expedition, he assured Michelangelo that he should be paid, and that he might resume his work upon the monument, and that he need entertain no personal apprehensions. The following letter by Michelangelo is very explicit, not only with reference to these offers

[1] Condivi, Ed. cit., p. 20.

and assurances, but also with regard to a separate cause of fear and motive for his acts and hesitation in meeting the advances made to him, which it is necessary to take into account in estimating his conduct at this important period of his life, as well as in aftertimes.

Florence 2d May 1506.

« Giuliano, I learn by a letter of yours how ill the Pope takes my departure. and how His Holiness will pay a sum and act according to our understanding, and that I may return free of apprehension. Of my departure it is true that I heard the Pope say on Holy-Saturday, speaking with a jeweller at table and with the Master of ceremonies, that he would not spend one half penny more either on little stones or big ones, by which I was not a little surprised; notwithstanding before I left, I asked for what was needful for continuing the work; his Holiness replied that I might return on Monday: and I returned on Monday, on Tuesday and on Wednesday and Thursday as he was aware; at last on Friday morning I was sent away, that is, turned out, and he who did so, said that he recognized me, but had his orders. Thus it was that I, having heard the above words on that Saturday and now seeing the effect of them, was seized with desperation; but this was not the only cause of my departure, but it was more than this, which I will not write; enough to say that he induced me to think that if I remained in Rome, my sepulchre would be made before the Pope's, and this was the cause of my sudden departure; now you write to me on the part of the Pope, and so to the Pope you will read this: and let His Holiness understand that I am more disposed, than ever I was, to go on with the work, and that if any how he will go on with the monument, it ought not to trouble him where I execute it, for it is an engagement between us that in five years it

shall be erected in St Peters, wherever it may please him, and it will be beautiful, as I have promised, and without its equal in the world. Now if His Holiness will pay the said sum to me here in Florence, whence I will write to him, and I have at my order at Carrara a quantity of marble, which I can bring here and I will bring here also what I have at Rome, although it may be to my great loss, I should not care, that I might do the work here, and I should send from time to time the works done, so that His Holiness would have the pleasure of seeing them, as if I staid in Rome, or even more, for he would see the complete work without other weariness, and as to the said moneys and the said work, I will come under such obligation as His Holiness may wish, and will give him the security, which he will require, here in Florence, if it be that he desire that, I shall guarantee it in every way....[1] all Florence, enough. I will also say that it is not possible to execute the said work for the price at Rome, at which I can execute it here, by reason of the many advantages which I have here, the which I do not know....[2] and besides I shall do better, and with more inclination, because I shall not have to think of so many things, wherefore, my very dear Giuliano, I pray you to reply, and that quickly: nothing more. »[3]

Whilst Michelangelo, no doubt, anxiously awaited an answer to this letter and to his proposals, he received a comunication from his friend Roselli in Rome, which was ill calculated to remove one cause of fear, for whilst it showed the friendly disposition of the Pope, it also showed that the machinations of his enemies, from which he dreaded the most serious consequences, were ceaseless and unrelenting.

Writing from Rome on the tenth of May, Roselli informed him of the wrong which Bramante did by stating to the Pope that

[1] [2] Blanks in the MS.

[3] From the Buonarroti Archives.

he never would return, because he felt himself to be incompetent to execute the figures, which were to be painted in the Chapel.

Rome 10th May 1506.

« Dear as a brother, I have to inform thee that on Saturday evening the Pope being at supper, I showed him some designs, which Bramante and I had to do together, after supper I showed them. He sent for Bramante and said to him. » Sangallo starts to morrow for Florence, and will bring back with him Michelangelo: Bramante replied to the Pope and said: « Holy Father he will not come, for I am intimate with Michelangelo, and he told me that he would not undertake the Chapel, although you insisted upon giving him this charge, but that he would only attend to the monument and not to painting, » and he further said « Holy Father, I believe that he has not the capacity, for he has not done much of the figure, especially where the figures are high up and foreshortened, which is quite another thing from painting on the ground.. » There the Pope replied and said « if he does not return, let me bear the blame, for I believe that he will certainly return. » At that moment I advanced and in the Pope's presence I gave Bramante the lie, and said that, which I believe, that you would have said for me, and in the mean time he did not know what to answer, and seemed to think that he had spoken badly. And I further said « Holy Father, he never spoke to Michelangelo, and if that which he has just said be true, you may take my head, as for him he never spoke to Michelangelo, and I believe that he will certainly return when your Holiness wishes; » and here the matter ended. I have nothing more to say. God protect thee from evil. If I can do anything, advise me, I will do it willingly. Remember me to Simone del Pollaiuolo. » [1]

PIETRO ROSELLI.

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

It is evident from this letter that the Pope had conversed with Michelangelo upon the project for employing him to paint in the Cappella Sistina, and that the latter was indisposed to accept the commission, although certainly not for the reasons assigned by Bramante. Having accepted the proposal made to him in Florence to paint the hall of the Signory, he could have no dread of the vault of the Sixtine, but he had set his heart upon carrying on the monument, and, undoubtedly, he preferred sculpture to painting. Roselli's letter shows, that although Julius permitted an extraordinary latitude to the conversation which took place in his presence, Bramante's ill natured remarks had no effect upon him, and in no way weakened his regard for Michelangelo.

Vasari states that the Pope sent three Briefs to the Signory of Florence, calling upon them to induce him to return to Rome by persuasion, and if that was not successful, by compulsion. He also employed the good offices of friends, and Giovanni Balducci assured him that the Pope wished him to return to Rome to go on with the work but lately begun, saying to him, « That it would be both honorable and useful to him, however you can judge better than I can of your own affairs, and before all, take good council, I only desire for you what I should for myself. » It is apparent, Michelangelo believed that these negotiations would lead to resuming his work upon the monument, although he continued unwilling to return to Rome, for he made a journey to Carrara upon the twentieth of May to look after the marbles which were at his orders there, a journey, which he certainly would not have undertaken, had he thought the execution of the monument hopeless. On his return to Florence, he resumed his labours on the cartoon and awaited events.

Pier Soderini the Gonfaloniere, — although he had in reality been as much gratified by Michelangelo's return, as he had pre-

viously been dissatisfied by his departure, wishing him to execute the painting in the Hall for which the cartoon was in preparation, — could not escape the responsibility thrown upon him by the repeated mandates of the Pope, and felt himself under the necessity of pressing Michelangelo to accede to the wishes of His Holiness, saying. « Thou hast tried an experiment with the Pope, which a King of France would not have ventured; but the time is past for entreaty, we will not go to war with him on thy account, or expose our State to risk: so prepare thyself to return. »[1]

Michelangelo still declined. There can be no doubt that his confidence in Julius had been rudely shaken. The sudden change from friendly intercourse to the insulting treatment which he received at the Vatican and which he has so graphically described, made an impression upon his sensitive mind not easily removed, nor did he entirely overcome this distrust, when finally he returned to the Pope, and the former friendly intercourse was resumed.

It is probable that the amicable advances of the Pope and the arguments of his friends would have prevailed sooner, notwithstanding his distrust, but for his apprehension of assassination, if he returned to Rome. Otherwise his conduct in declining all steps to reconciliation and embarassing his own government must seem inexcusable. It is probable that he informed Soderini of his fears, as he had made it known to the Pope through Sangallo, for when he stated that he would rather pass into the service of the Turk than return to Rome, the Gonfaloniere significantly remarked. « That he would make a better choice to die, siding with the Pope, than to live passing over to the Turk. »[2] This remark is not intelligible, unless Michelangelo had explained his difficulty.

[1] [2] Condivi, Ed. cit., p. 21.

Soderini continued to urge « that he should have no apprehension, because the Pope was benignant, and recalled him, because he liked him, and not to harm him: and that if he still feared the Signory would send him with the title of ambassador; as to persons with a public character no violence could be offered, which was not offered to those who sent him. »

The Gonfaloniere wrote to Rome in the month of July 1506 in reply to one of the Papal missives « Michelangelo the Sculptor is very much frightened, so that, notwithstanding the Brief sent by His Holiness, it would be necessary that the most Reverend (Cardinal) of Pavia should write a letter under his own hand to us, giving security for his safety, and we have used and adopted every means to induce him to return, assuring your Signory that if gentle means are not adopted, he will depart from this, as he has already twice determined. » [1]

It is evident that besides his fear of assassination Michelangelo had by this time, and under the circumstances it is not to be wonderd at, become apprehensive of the wrath of the Pope. He was however wrong in his estimate of the character of Julius and of his personal regard.

In the remarkable letter to Sangallo there is a statement, which merits especial attention, « for it is an engagement between us that in five years it shall bc erected in St Peters wherever it may please him, and it will be beautiful as I have promised and without its equal in the world. » If the number of statues and groups contained in the sketch in the Florence gallery be reduced to forty, as specified by Condivi, this implies that Michelangelo bound himself to produce eight statues in each year, besides the architectural ornaments and massive structure of this great monument. It is evident therefore that he intended to employ a great body of assistants and to surround himself with

[1] Gaye, V. II, p. 83.

pupils, for it is clearly impossible that he should produce so many statues, as those agreed upon, if in his usual manner he worked alone, some of them being of colossal size. At his usual rate of production they would have occupied on a moderate calculation fifty years.

Michelangelo resumed his work upon the Cartoon for the mural painting in the ancient palace of the Municipality. In the notes added to the edition of Vasari by Milanesi and Pini, the date is taken as August 1505, but, it is calculated at the same time, that Michelangelo left Florence at the beginning of 1505, and it is quite certain that he did not return there with the intention of remaining till the end of April 1506. It was therefore impossible that be should have completed the Cartoon in Florence in August 1505, as he was then at Carrara, where he proceeded in April that year and remained eight months. He returned to Rome in November, commenced his work upon the monument, and fled, as has been seen by his own letter, towards the end of April 1506.

Stress is laid upon a statement in an account of Piero di Zanobi, dated August 30th 1505, « for five laths for fixing up the Cartoon of Michelangelo » from which it is inferred that at that time the cartoon was finished, and that outlay was made for commencing the picture, which Michelangelo was prevented doing, from the circumstance of his having been summoned by the Pope to go to Bologna. But this did not take place till November in the following year and the account therefore must be erroneously dated. [1]

Michelangelo had been provided with a spacious room in the hospital of the Dyers at St Onofrio, in which to execute his Cartoon. Like his great competitor Lionardo da Vinci, he selected for his subject an episode of the war with Pisa.

[1] There may be a misprint somewhere.

The moment of action represented was that of a sudden attack made by the English partizan leader, Sir John Hawkwood, then in the pay of the Pisans, on the Florentine army, whilst a portion of the soldiers were bathing in the Arno. These are represented rushing from the water, climbing the steep banks of the river, and hurriedly dressing and arming themselves. An elderly man crowned with ivy leaves to shade his head from the sun, hearing the tumult, the shouts of the soldiers, and the beating of the drums, with energy pervading every part of his body, with a truth, a vivacity of attitude admirable in drawing and expression, struggles to force his leggings over his wet limbs and to get ready for action. Some soldiers are depicted rushing into the fight with loose drapery hastily thrown round them, others naked in their eagerness and with only their offensive weapons in their hands. The variety of attitude is infinite, involving the most difficult foreshortenings, for Michelangelo was bent upon showing his powers. Some of the groups in the cartoon are described as having been drawn in outline with charcoal, some hatched with chalk, others shaded with the stump or whatever rubber may have been used, the lights being heightened with white. Artists were astonished and overcome with admiration on seeing this cartoon, in which Michelangelo showed them to what an elevation art might be raised, and some said who saw it that nothing comparable to it had been done whether by his hauds or by those of any other artist, and that no other might hope to equal it. All those artists, who formed their style upon it and drew from it, Vasari says became famous. If not true of all, it was so of a considerable number.

Of the effect exercised by Michelangelo through his works upon many Masters of more or less renown, there can be no question. His art was a revelation. The newly discovered sculptures of the Greeks, and after them the creations of Michel-

angelo, illumined the paths trodden by artists, elevated their conceptions, gave breadth to their views, but did not divert the greater amongst them from the manner, which the individual genius or temperament of each had marked for himself.

There is a paragraph of Vasari's description of this grand work which has a special interest. It is that, which states that portions of it were completed in effect of chiaroscuro. As it was the custom of artists to study the chiaroscuro as well as the form in black and white before beginning to paint, it is probable that sections of this cartoon were executed with extraordinary care. « Michelangelo wished to show his powers and mastery of the art. »[1] There remain to this day drawings by Michelangelo, which are carried to such perfection of finish, with at the same time such freedom and mastery, that they may be spoken of as painting with the point. This practice of working with the crayon, either in black only, or in black and white, or in black, red and white, or else in red, or red and white, was so universal amongst the old masters of every school and was carried so far, that there must have been sound reasons for it. Apart from the esteem in which such drawing was held as important to an artist's training, the analogy between it and tempera painting, and also fresco painting, both methods involving the use of the point, that point being a brush instead of chalk, whilst the system of lining and hatching is almost identical, accounts for the wide spread prevalence of careful chalk drawing. It in fact gave such facility, that the readiness with which Michelangelo, when in Florence consented to paint, although chiefly occupied as a sculptor, is partly accounted for by the confidence with which he was inspired by his infinite dexterity with the point. He painted rarely and only at intervals, in oil and fresco and always with as much success, as if he never omitted to practise

[1] Vasari, Life of Michelangelo.

and carry out in painting as well as in drawing his own maxim « Nulla dies sine linea » and the fact increases the wonder, which his paintings inspire.

As Michelangelo, yielding to the representations of his friends and the wish of the Pope, left Florence for Bologna in November, then if he finished the Cartoon in August, there are three months of his stay in Florence, of the occupation of which there is no record. However his time was occupied, the mind of Michelangelo could hardly fail to be excited by the controversy, which raged in Florence between the artists who preferred his cartoon to the great picture of Lionardo da Vinci, and those who preferred the latter work, a controversy carried on with all the fervour of Italian feeling, but which need not be renewed here. We are not now in a position to compare the two artists, for we know little of Lionardo da Vinci's power of drawing the nude, in which Michelangelo excelled. Lionardo's great monumental work, of which the shadow survives at Milan, is entirely composed of draped figures. The materials for comparison are not sufficient and in their absence it is useless to attempt it. At this period the two greatest artists in the world, between whom there seemed to be no place for envy of each other, but rather for mutual respeet and for noble and disinterested friendship, were unhappily divided and influenced by very different feelings. In a brief memoir of Lionardo by an anonymous writer dated 1510, which is preserved in the National Library at Florence, the following anecdote is related. « Lionardo was of a handsome person, graceful and with a beautiful countenance. He wore a short rose coloured cloak only reaching the knee at a time when long dresses were worn, and he had a magnificent head of hair, which fell in curls and carefully dressed, as far down as his breast. Lionardo passing together with G. da Gavina by Santa Trinita from the bench of the Spini,

where there was a meeting of honourable men, who disputed regarding a passage of Dante, they called to Lionardo requesting him to explain the passage. It happened by chance that at that moment Michelangelo came in sight, and was called by one of those present, when Lionardo said that Michelangelo would explain the passage, who fancying that this was said in mockery angrily replied, explain it yourself, who designed a horse to be cast in bronze which you could not cast, and shamefully gave it up. And so saying he turned his back and went on his way saying, whilst Lionardo reddened at these words intended to wound him, « and you were believed in by these Milanese blockheads. » [1]

This is an unhappy story, it is told by an anonymous writer, but the complaints from time to time occurring of the harshness with which Michelangelo sometimes expressed himself are in favour of its general truth. He was subject to outbursts of passion, and on this occasion, whilst Lionardo appears to have conducted himself with dignity, Michelangelo behaved ill.

[1] Archives. Florence, Third Serie, V. XVI, p. 226.

Chapter V

Events occurring at this period of Michelangelo's career by which it was materially influenced, the scene of his labours was once more changed, and his reconciliation with Julius was brought about in a manner honourable to both. The Pope's conquests of Perugia and Bologna have been so effectively described in other biographies, that it is needless to go over the same ground, however attractive from the strangeness and interest of the events and the picturesqueness of their character. The outset of the Papal army from Rome, led by the Pope in person, accompanied by a court of twenty-four Cardinals, and no doubt other Church dignitaries with their numerous retinues; by Roman nobles of historic names and their followers, and by five hundred men at arms with their usual proportion of infantry, with the mixed crowd of camp followers in the picturesque costume of the day, with the baggage, provisions, sumpter mules and ox carts, must have made a spectacle which it is to be regretted that fine art did not at that time record.

For more than one march from Rome this army must have traversed the Campagna, then as now marked by sombre desolation. The Pontiff probably hastened on to the shelter of the nearest town, followed by the high dignitaries of his court, but the march of the army was necessarily slow, and the bivouacs in the Campagna or along the skirts of the Appenines, and afterwards within their defiles, must have presented many picturesque scenes. The roads then were far from being what they are now, and the indomitable Julius, spite of every precaution, endured hardship and privation, especially in that part of the march which traversed the mountains, where towns are far apart, villages but wretched collections of houses of the poorest sort, and solitary residences or farms rare.

The expedition ascended the valley of the Tiber to the picturesque Orvieto, perched on the summit of precipices. Thence the warlike Pope proceeded to Perugia, where he received the abject submission of its tyrant Giampaolo Baglioni, who not only yielded, but agreed to join the expedition with one hundred and fifty men at arms.

Baglioni must have been sorely tempted, when the Pope and his clerical following entered Perugia, with no adequate military guard in most unmilitary fashion; trusting apparently to the demoralization of his adversary, and exposing himself and his Cardinals, not merely to possible, but to very probable danger.

Through mountain defiles the Pope advanced to Imola, and was there joined by French auxiliaries, which with characteristic perfidy, Louis XII had promised to Bentivoglio, who being thus deserted seeing that resistance was useless, left Bologna. The Pope entered that city in bloodless triumph on the festival of St Martin the eleventh of November, two months and fifteen days after his departure from Rome. Notwithstanding his political cares and occupations in ordering his conquest, he

remembered Michelangelo, and caused the Cardinal of Pavia to write to the authorities in Florence to persuade him to return to the Papal service, giving every assurance of honourable treatment and personal safety. Michelangelo had now so far conquered his apprehensions, that he at last set out bearing with him the official reply to the Cardinal, recommending him in the strongest terms to the good offices of his Eminence with the Pope, and thus describing him. « There is united in him every good gift comprehending capacity and excellence in his art. » to which the Signory added « We also shall be gratified and greatly obliged » by the Cardinal's good offices. Michelangelo was further provided with another letter by his friend Piero Soderini to his brother, the Cardinal of Volterra, thus expressed:

« The bearer is Michelangelo sculptor, who is sent to be at the disposal of His Holiness, our Lord. We certify to you that he is an excellent young man, and in his profession unequalled in Italy, perhaps in the whole world. We cannot too earnestly recommend him. He is of such a disposition that, if he is kindly bespoken and well treated, he will do every thing. It is needful to show him affection and favour, and he in return will do works which will astonish all who see them. We make known to you that he has here begun an historical picture for the public, which will be a marvel, and also twelve Apostles, nine feet in height each, which will be transcendent works. We reiterate that we recommend him with all our good will. »

22nd day of November 1506.

« The said Michelangelo proceeds upon the pledge of our faith. » [1]

[1] Gaye, V. II, p. 93.

This interesting letter describes the disposition and merits of Michelangelo, as they were understood by his true and intimate friend Soderini. It harmonizes with his proceedings and his intercourse with others, and if it does not sum up all the elements of his character, it dwells in just terms on more, than one attractive side of it. No doubt this letter was read to Julius, who was informed by it, if he had not heard the fact before through other sources, that Michelangelo « had begun an historical picture for the public, which would be a marvel, » and that he willingly undertook to execute an important mural painting. It will be well to remember this in estimating future transactions between them. Soderini also mentions the statues of the twelve apostles. He had evidently seen the St Mathew partially blocked out in marble, and already described, and must have formed a high estimate of it to include it in this letter, omitting to mention other and more important works, which however he may have thought were sufficiently well known.

Upon his arrival at Bologna in the first days of December, Michelangelo went to the Church of San Petronio to hear mass. Whilst thus engaged, he was recognized by some attendants of the Pope, who at once informed him of His Holiness's desire to see him without loss of time, and escorted him to the presence. The Pope, although undoubtedly gratified by his arrival, regarded him austerely and said. « In the stead of your coming to us, you seem to have expected that we should attend upon you. » Michelangelo kneeling, with dignified submission asked that be might he pardoned, adding « that he felt that he had not merited the treatment, which he had received. » An unlucky courtier charged with his official presentation, here interfered, saying, « He has erred in ignorance, these painters out of their art are all so » but he had better been silent, for he brought down on his own head the pent up wrath of Julius, who shouted.

« How, dost thou presume to reprove him whom we have not, thou art an ignorant and pitiful fellow, get out of our sight and go to the devil. » The unhappy official was driven out of the presence chamber with blows. Strange picture of the times and of the temper of Julius.

Motioning to Michelangelo to approach, the Pope gave him his pardon, and with friendly expressions desired him to remain in Bologna, where he had a great work for him to do. In a few days he was summoned and was then informed that this work was to be a statue of the Sovereign Pontiff, to be cast in bronze, and placed over the doorway of the principal entrance of San Petronio. The nature of the agreement made was described at a subsequent period in a letter written by Michelangelo to Messer Giovan Francesco Fattucci. « When Pope Julius was at Bologna, I was obliged to go there with the shoe latch round my neck to ask his pardon, he gave me his portrait to make of bronze, a sitting figure fourteen feet in height, and having asked me what it would cost, I answered that I thought that it might be cast for one thousand ducats, but that it was not my art and that I could not undertake it: he replied, go, work and cast it often enough till it succeeds, and we shall give you enough to content you. To be brief, it was cast in two trials, and at the end of two years that I remained there, I found myself with a balance of four ducats and a half, and in this period I had no more, and the whole expenditure which I made in these two years was one thousand ducats, with which I said that I would cast it, and this was paid to me in various sums by Messer Antonio Maria da Lignano Bolognese. » [1]

No sooner had Michelangelo received the Popes orders, than he commenced the statue, in a pavillion behind the church set apart as a workshop, with such alacrity and modelled the clay

[1] The Buonarroti Archives.

with such industry and rapidity, that the Pope was greatly pleased and did not fail to say so with his usual frankness and energy. These expressions of approbation gratified Michelangelo, who writing to his brother after one of these interviews expresses his gratitude to God « as by means of this statue, if it proved successful, he hoped to win the favour of His Holiness. » That he might carry on his work without delay and receive the assistance which he required, he sent to Florence for three persons, Pietro Urbano, Lapo and Ludovico competent to give him the necessary aid.[1] Of these, Lapo he found could not be trusted, being boastful, intriguing and dishonest, Michelangelo therefore dismissed him from his service, but in doing so lost Ludovico also, who was induced by Lapo to return to Florence to bear witness, to the story which the latter invented to account for his dismissal.

Anticipating the possible results of the statements of the pair of worthies, Michelangelo advised his brother Buonarroto of their departure, saying: « Not that I care, for they are not together worth three farthings, but if they manage to speak to Ludovico,[2] he may be taken by surprise, tell him not to listen to them. »[3] This warning did not suffice, for when they presented themselves to the old father and told their tale, instead of refusing to listen to them, he took their side, and blamed Michelangelo for his conduct towards them, who replied with a calmness and dignity which showed the generosity of his disposition and his decision of character.

[1] Lapo d'Antonio di Lapo. Florentine Sculptor. Till 1491 he was one of the Masters salaried by the office of works of the Cathedral. He sculptured in 1505 the marble tomb of Messer Antonio di Terranuova Hospitaller of Santa Maria Nuova. On the tenth of December 1506 he was licensed hy the office of works to absent himself and to go to Bologna. Born 1465 died 1526. Ludovico di Guglielmo del Buono surnamed Lotti born in Florence in 1458. An apprentice of the goldsmith Antonio del Pollaiuolo. Afterwards became a metal caster and was a Master of the foundry of cannon of the Florentine Republic. In 1516 he cast a bell and two Candelabra for the Cathedral.

[2] Ludovico Buonarroti his father.

[3] Buonarroti Archives.

« Dearest Father, I have to-day received your letter (dated eighth February 1507) by which I understand that you have been misled by Lapo and Ludovico, I hold it to be my duty to submit when you reprove me, when I deserve to be reproved as a sinner as much as others, perhaps more so. But know that I have done no wrong in this matter on which you accuse me, neither towards them nor any one else, except that I did more for them than they deserved, and all men with whom I have been mixed up are aware what I know of them; and even should they not know, Lapo and Ludovico are those who know it better than any one else, that the one had in one month and a half twenty-seven ducats, and the other eighteen full weight, and their maintainance besides. I therefore beseech you that you will not get upon your high horse when they complain of me, rather ask them how long they were with me, and how much they had from me, and then you may demand what they complain of. But their great object, and especially that of this sad fellow Lapo, was this; they gave out to every one that it was they who did this work, or that they were associated with me, and they never understood — Lapo especially — who was their master, till I turned them out; by this only he has learnt that he was in my service; having prepared so much business and begun to boast of favour with the Pope, he was astonished that I should turn him off as a stupid fellow. I regret that he has seven ducats of mine, but if I return to Florence he shall repay them at any cost, and he ought to repay others which he had of me, if he had any conscience. I will not say more, because I have written regarding these men to Messer Agnolo, [1] to whom I beg that you will go, and if you can take Granacci [2] with you, and make him read the letter which I have written,

[1] Manfidi Herald of the Signory of Florence.
[2] Painter and attached friend of Michelangelo.

you will understand what rascals they are. But I request you to keep to yourself that which I write about Ludovico, for if I cannot find some one to come here to melt, I shall bring him back, for in truth I did not turn him away, but Lapo being so blameworthy induced him to go to mitigate his case; you will understand from the Herald how you have to act, have no words with Lapo, for it is too discreditable that we should be mixed up with him.

With regard to Giovansimone it does not appear to me that he should come here, for the Pope departs this Carneval, and I believe that he will direct himself towards Florence. He does not leave things in good order here, according to what is rumoured there are causes for suspicion, not to be inquired into nor written about. Enough of that. If nothing happens, which I hardly hope, still I will not have the burthen of brothers on my shoulders. Do not go about making a wonder of this, but say nothing to any man, for I have need of men, and I might not find any to come, and after all, possibly things may go well. I shall soon be with you, and I shall do that, which please God, will satisfy Giovansimone and the others. Tomorrow I shall write to you about money, which I mean to send you, and also as to that which you have to do with it. With Piero I have an understanding, he will answer for me: he is an honest man, as he has always been. »

The letter is signed here, then in Michelangelo's manner a long postscript follows:

« Again I inform you, so as to reply to the extravagant accusations, which Lapo brings against me. One fact is enough, and it is this; I wished to buy seven hundred and twenty pounds of wax, and before buying I said to Lapo, find out who has got

any, and make a bargain, and I will give you money to procure it. Lapo went and returned, and told me that it was not to be had for a farthing less than nine ducats full weight, and twenty Bolognini the hundredweight, equivalent to nine ducats forty soldi, and that I should hasten to take it at once, as it was a chance that he had found it. I said that he should go and try to take off these forty soldi, and I would then take it, he answered, these Bolognese are of such a nature that they never take off a farthing from that which they ask. I now became suspicious and dropped the subject; but on the same day I called Piero on one side, and told him to go quietly and to find out the price of the wax per hundredweight. Piero went to the same merchant as Lapo, and bargained with him for eight ducats and a half, and I took the wax, sending Piero for the discount which was readily given. This is one of the « extravagances » which I did by him, and indeed I am aware that he was surprised that I discovered his roguery. Eight ducats full weight and his keep was not enough for him, but that he must contrive to cheat me besides; and he may have done so many times of which I know nothing, for I trusted him, nor did I ever see a man of a fairer outside, whence I think that with his apparent worth he may have cheated others, so trust him in nothing; and pretend not to see him. »[1]

The life which Michelangelo led at Bologna was poor and laborious, so much so that he could not even receive his brother Giovansimone, who so often proposed to visit him. He had hired a wretched room, and purchased one bed, which he slept in, in common with his assistants.

He was thus penurious, not for himself, for he did not fail to give to his father and brothers — not at this time from his gains

[1] Buonarroti MSS. British Museum.

from his commission for he could not reckon upon them — but from his savings deposited in the Hospital of Sta Maria Nuova. When he wrote, he dwelt upon his anxiety to return home and to be near his family, that he might assist them, and whilst working at Bologna, he was sanguine as to his success with the statue of the Pope and with his future prospects of reward.

It is to be remarked that he did not contemplate solitary work, but like artists of his time employed able assistants, it is manifest that both Lapo and Ludovico took a share in modelling the statue of the Pope. It also appears, that the wretched way in which he chose to live, reduced him to such a level with his auxiliaries as to deprive him of their respect. He brought upon himself their assertion of equality and placed himself at a disadvantage with them, and probably with the retinue of the Pope and others in Bologna. Michelangelo was very jealous of any disrespect shown to him, yet at times through life, by his eccentric habits he unfortunately prompted its expression, as upon this occasion. He was at the same time of an obliging disposition very ready to serve others, and to sacrifice time and thought for them, which was thus illustrated when he was so busy in Bologna. Piero Aldobrandini requested the great artist to procure for him the blade of a dagger of the fine quality of steel, for which that city was noted. The request was first made through Buonarroto, and Michelangelo gave the order to the best armourer, but such was the demand, owing to the presence of the Papal court, that although numerous and excellent artificers flocked to so excellent a market for their skill, still this particular blade could not be got ready and sent to Florence before the sixth of March 1507. Aldobrandini was dissatisfied with it, when it reached him, and had the bad taste to say so. Buonarroto with equal clumsiness informing Michelangelo, who was naturally indignant and thus wrote:

26th March 1507.

« I had thine to me days ago, by which I am fully informed regarding the dagger for Pietro Aldobrandini. I tell thee that were it not for thy regard for him, I would let him chatter as much as he pleased; know that the blade which I sent, was made to his measure; for he sent me one on paper in a letter, and wrote to me to have it done exactly in that manner; if he wanted a dagger, he should not have sent me the measure of a rapier. But I now write to thee what I would have avoided, and that is that thou shouldst not keep company with him, he is not company for thee. Enough said. If he comes to thee for the blade, do not give it to him on any account, but without rudeness to him, say that I have given it to a friend. It cost me nineteen Carlini and thirteen quattrini of tax. » [1]

That these might not be merely unmeaning words, Michelangelo wrote again to his brother on the last day of March, saying that he was pleased that Piero would not have the dagger.

« It was not for him to carry arms at his belt » and he requests Buonarroto to make a present of it to Filippo Strozzi, a very different sort of man, and to say nothing of the price, adding with kindly consideration for his brother:

« That he had not seen the blade, so do not give it, unless it seems fit for him, in case thou shouldst not appear favourably, because he merits something better, than Piero. » [2]

It appears that Strozzi had the dagger, but that Buonarroto did not act with the delicacy and liberality recommended by Michelangelo, who some time afterwards in very plain terms reproached him:

« With having acted in so lousy a way towards Strozzi. » [3]

[1] Buonarroti Archives.
[2] Buonarroti Archives.
[3] British Museum MSS. Letter of Michelangelo to Buonarroto 20 April 1507.

Michelangelo devoted himself to the model of the statue with that solicitude and untiring energy, which marked his character. Before the Pope left Bologna, not for Florence as had been reported, but for Rome, the clay model was almost finished.

The statue was draped in the voluminous and richly ornamented robes of a supreme Pontiff, with the tiara on the head, the right hand lifted in the action of benediction, whilst the left was as yet unoccupied. The Pope examined this representation of himself before his departure, and, no doubt with the satisfaction, which, as mentioned in the artist's correspondence, he had before demonstrated. Being asked what should be placed in the left hand « a book? » — « rather a sword, I am no reader » was the characteristic reply.[1] The Pope in his turn asked a question: « Does the right hand bless or menace? » Michelangelo replied with ready tact and entering into the humour of the scene; « Holy Father, it menaces this people if they be not prudent. » If the question be characteristic of the Pope, there can hardly be a doubt that it indicates the energy of the action of the statue, the presence in it of the « terribile » of Michelangelo; for referring to the work of no other sculptor would the question have been apposite.

The time was now approaching for the departure of Julius from Bologna. He was not destined to see the finished statue, which was to commemorate his victory. A revolution in Genoa towards the close of the year 1506 called for the intervention of the French King, and French troops crossed the Alps, whilst a French fleet sailed to assist in the investment of the « superb » city and to reduce it to obedience. Under these circumstances Julius could hardly feel comfortable in the vicinity of his French allies. With them on their own side of the Alps, he could negotiate more favourably, than when actually intervening in arms to the south of that barrier. He discovered that the air of Bo-

[1] Condivi, Ed. cit., p. 28.

logna was unfavourable to him, [1] and on the twenty-second of February 1507, his last act in that city was the laying of the foundation stone of a fort, near the Galliera gate on the side of Ferrara. He did not forget, however, to provide Michelangelo with a credit for one thousand crowns on the Bank of Messer Antonmaria da Lignano, to be paid to him in instalments, as the work went on.

The clay model of the statue being finished, was moulded, and the cast in wax was made. This occupied the sculptor till the end of April. It is of interest to estimate the time spent in the execution of this colossal statue. Michelangelo reached Bologna in the beginning of December 1506, his letter from the Signory being dated the 27th of November of the same year. Probably he received his instructions from the Pope a few days after his arrival, whilst a place for working in was immediately provided, when it is reasonable to suppose that his next step was to set up the stout platform and framework necessary for so great a statue. Several waggon loads of well tempered clay had then to be procured; at least fifteen days must have been occupied in these operations, and whilst directing them, he in all likelihood made his wax model or sketch of the proposed portrait, and it may be assumed that the Pope gave him some sittings either for a bust or for sketches. Assistants would then pile up the heavy masses of clay, which he was to mould into form, as these must have amounted to several tons, the statue in its sitting posture being at least fourteen feet in height, and of great width, owing to the nature of the costume. Before the twenty-second of the following February, that is in about two months and a half, he had so far completed his colossal work, that it became the fit subject of the conversation with Julius, which has been related.

[1] Guicciardini, History of Italy, V. III, p. 204.

By the end of April the wax cast was made and carefully retouched where needed, the internal and external moulds were prepared in the usual way, the process having occupied about twenty-five days.

The letters of Michelangelo indicate the anxiety from which he suffered. It may well be supposed that he was worn in body by the prodigious effort, which he had made, and that his mind was disturbed at a time, when calm was so necessary to the successful issue of his work. Whatever the reason, he was yet nervous with regard to the Pope's disposition towards him, notwithstanding the obvious favour with which he was treated. No doubt he remembered when in Rome his intimacy with Julius, the many marks of regard shown him, the interest in his work, the appreciation of his talent, the daily friendly intercourse, and the sudden change which took place in so unaccountable a manner. The refusal to pay the money justly due, the denials made at the hitherto open door of the Vatican, and the contumely with which he was treated. These facts could not be overlooked, and therefore, if he felt distrust now, spite of the renewal of kindly intercourse, it was but natural to do so.

There was also the treachery and misconduct of two of his assistants, when he needed honest and faithful service. There was the irritating vulgarity of his friend, the humiliating folly of his brother and the senile injustice of his father. Notwithstanding these annoyances, he worked with energy and astonishing rapidity, but he had no knowledge of the process of bronze casting. He did what was best under the circumstances and sent to Florence for the Master Bernardino, [1] who was of high

[1] Maestro Bernardino d'Antonio dal Ponte di Milano, who in 1504 passed into the service of the Florentine Republic as Master Caster of artillery, in which service he remained till 1512. He must have been held to be a skilful founder as Michelangelo employed him to cast the statue of Pope Julius. Francesco Rustici employed him in 1509 to cast

repute in the art, when suddenly a new cause of disquietude presented itself, and seemed to justify the Pope's statement, that the air of Bologna was unhealthy. The plague broke out, and the troubled artist wrote to his brother Buonarroto on the twenty-sixth of March:

« Here plague has begun, and of a bad kind, it spares no one whom it attacks, although as yet there are few cases; I hear about forty. »[1] Besides the plague within the city, another without its walls made it difficult to enter, for the banished Bentivoglios and their partizans had gathered a force of six hundred infantry and approached the gates, making the roads unsafe, and filling the city with anxiety and alarm. On the second day Michelangelo wrote to his brother Giovansimone:

« You must know that people here stifle themselves in armour, and for four days including this one the whole land is in arms with great uproar and danger, especially to the party of the church, and all this on account of the exiles, that is the Bentivoglios, who have tried to reenter the city with a great multitude of people; but the courage and prudence of the Legate, with the foresight which he has shewn, have, I believe, once more liberated the land, for there is news that at twenty-three o'clock this evening the enemy retreated with small honour; notwithstanding, pray God for me, and keep your spirits up, for I shall soon be with you. »[2] There is not a letter in which he does not show this ever present desire to return home, and for the sake of which he gave himself no rest from his work, which however kept him longer in Bologna, than he expected.

in bronze a group of statues to be placed over one of the doors of the Baptistry Florence. He also cast the grating of the new Chapel in the Palace of the Signory, and the bronze ornament of the base of the David by Verrochio. The permission granted to him by the Signory to join Michelangelo at Bologna is dated 7th May 1507. Note by the Cavaliere Gaetano Milanesi on the letters of Michelangelo to Buonarroto 20th April 1501.

[1] Buonarroti Archives. Letter of 26th March 1507.

[2] Buonarroti Archives.

Maestro Bernardino obtained the permission of the Signory to place himself in the service of Michelangelo. Before his arrival those of a Frenchman had been secured, but he must have been parted with when Bernardino arrived, whose license is still preserved in the central archives of Florence.

Die xv Maii 1507.

« Dederunt licentiam Magistro Bernardino Magistri Antonii magistri getti existenti in civitate Florentie eundi Bononiam pro gittando immaginem eream summi ponteficis. »

With the aid of so skilled a master in the art of brass founding, Michelangelo hoped to cast the statue about the middle of June. The intensity of his feelings on the subject may be seen in his next letter to his brother:

« Say also to Ludovico that I believe that about the middle of next month I shall by all means cast my statue, so that if he will pray to God that it succeed, let him do so at that time, and say to him that I pray him to do so. »[1]

It is probable that on the arrival of the Master Founder a furnace had to be built. Metal was provided, part of it being a bell from the tower of Giovanni Bentivoglio, confiscated to help to form the statue of his enemy and to commemorate his own defeat, and part of it a broken gun the property of the commune of Bologna. This provision of metal of very different mixtures was not calculated to assuage the anxiety of Michelangelo regarding the casting, which took place towards the end of June, but failed to a considerable extent; the metal was not sufficiently melted and there was not enough to fill the mould, therefore the upper part of the statue remained uncast.

[1] British Museum. Letter of Michelangelo to Buonarroto 26th May 1507.

However grieved and mortified, the disappointed Artist did not lose courage, nor did he express himself otherwise than with a lofty and placable spirit in speaking of the man, whom he had absolutely confided in, but who was to blame for the calamity. Thus he tells the story:

« It is enough to say that it has happened badly: but still, thank God, I hope for the best; I shall know in a few days what I have to do, and I shall inform you. Tell Ludovic, and be of good cheer, and if it happens that I must do it over again and that I cannot return home, I shall adopt every means to do that which I have promised to you, as best I can. »[1]

So good was he, that at a time when personally he suffered much, with a prospect of a grievous loss of time and property before him, with plague on all sides, he used words of comfort and encouragement to the members of his family, and spoke generously of the author of his disappointment. Writing on the sixth of July to the same brother, he says:

« Buonarroto, know how that we have cast my statue, in which process I have not had too much good luck; and this has been caused by the fact, that Master Bernardino did not melt the metal well; how this happened, would be too long a story to write. It is enough to say that my statue is cast up to the waist, the rest of the model remaining in the furnace not being melted, so that to take it out, I must break the furnace down and have it rebuilt within this week. On this next attempt I shall cast from above, and so finish the filling of the mould, and I believe that it will do very well; but not without much anxiety and fatigue as well as expense. I had such faith in Master Bernardino, that I could have believed him capable of founding

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

even without fire; nevertheless it is not that he is not a good master, or that he has not done it with good will; but he who fails, fails. He has failed to my loss and also to his own, for he is so abused, that he cannot lift his eyes in Bologna. If you see Baccio d'Agniolo read him this letter and ask him to inform San Gallo at Rome and remember me to him: and to Giovanni da Ricasoli and Granaccio. I believe that if the affair goes well, in fifteen or twenty days I shall leave this and return to Florence. If it does not go well, I shall perhaps have to do it over again. I shall advise you of every thing. Tell me how Giovansimone is. »[1]

Michelangelo did what he describes in this letter and cast the upper part of the statue successfully, after which, Master Bernardino went back to Florence, and Michelangelo besought his brother, that when he spoke to him about it, he would look favourably on him. The figure being cleared from the mould, it was found to be cast as Michelangelo hoped, but it evidently required at least a month to finish it by hand, and consequently no little labour to the artist, who writes to his brother on the eleventh of the following November:

« Know that I wish that you should not soon return here, for I live with the utmost discomfort and suffer extreme fatigue, whilst I do nothing but work day and night; and I have suffered and do suffer such fatigue, that if I had to do such another, I do not think that life would suffice, for it has been a terrible work, for had it been put into the hands of another, it would have turned out ill; but I feel that the prayers of some one have aided me and kept me in good health, for it was against the opinion of all Bologna that I ever could finish it, after it was cast: and at first there was no one who could believe that

[1] British Museum. MSS. Michelangelo to Buonarroto.

I should ever cast it. Enough, I have carried it out successfully, but I shall not have finished it by the end of this month as I hoped, but in the next I shall finish it and return home. Be of good cheer, for anyhow I shall do what I promised. Comfort Ludovico and Giovansimone on my part and write to me how Giovansimone gets on. »[1]

It is evident from this letter that the cast was not a good one, that it was rough and needed the file, the chisel and chasing tools, and that Michelangelo, who had never worked in metal in his life, would trust it to no one but himself, but with prodigious fatigue and labour wrought upon the hard bronze with his own hands; he might permit of assistance, but he must have chased the features and hands, and that he did much more than this, is evident from his letter to his brother. Chiselling or chasing a work of art in metal can only be done successfully by an artist. That Michelangelo found no efficient assistant is obvious, and he is here found chasing a colossal bronze statue, which was not well cast. His prodigious energy, his fertility of resource, his genius enabled him to do with success, that which by other men is only done after long and continuous labour.

His great work being finished, Michelangelo however anxious to depart, was still detained by the commands of the Pope, who wished him not to leave Bologna, although those in charge of it, had not placed the statue. Before its elevation it stood for three days within the Church, and by a letter preserved in the Bolognese archives dated the twenty-first February 1508 we learn that:

« This evening the statue, the portrait of His Holiness, was drawn to the place prepared for it above the great door of the

[1] British Museum. MSS. Michelangelo to Buonarroto.

church of San Petronio, to see which, such a concourse of people were assembled, that the operations of the directors of the work were impeded. The great applause of the people, which followed the unveiling of this excellent statue, and their rejoicings on the occasion, testify their faith in, and devotion to His Holiness, and desire to see him again here. It is truly wonderful and rivals the ancient statues of Rome, and is worthy to be the sacred effigy of his Beatitude, whom we have to thank, that in addition to the innumerable benefits bestowed on this town, he has adorned it with so magnificent an ornament. »

So also a manuscript ascribed to Sebastian Agucchia, dated Bologna 21st February 1508.

« On the twenty-first of February at fifteen o'clock, the hour fixed as fortunate by astrological observation, the sitting bronze portrait of Julius the second was uncovered, with the tiara on his head, his right hand in the attitude of benediction, and his left holding the Keys. It was placed over the door of San Petronio to the sound of pipes and drums and the ringing of bells, and in the evening there were rejoicings with fireworks. »

In spite of astrological observation, in spite of the gratitude of the Bolognese as described by the partizan of the Papal conquest, in striking and terrible contrast with all these rejoicings, is the record preserved in the annals of Leandro Alberti:

« Afterwards on the thirtieth December 1511 the image of Pope Julius was cast to the ground from its place over the door of San Petronio. The charge of this operation was given to the Engineer Arduino, who, that it might not break the pavement in falling, spread straw and fascines. Notwithstanding the great mass of metal left its mark upon the stones, as may still be seen. The partisans of the Bentivoglios, utterly indifferent to

the merits of the statue and only hating their enemy, treated it with every indignity accompanied by execrations and abusive words. Afterwards the Bentivoglios sent the statue to Ferrara to the Duke Alfonso to be made into artillery, who made of it a great cannon, which he placed on the castle, than which I never saw a longer or bigger piece. After some days there was elevated to the place, which the statue had occupied, a picture representing God the Father, and the name of Julius being obliterated, there was substituted the inscription:

« SCITOTE QUONIAM DEUS IPSE EST DOMINUS. »

Chapter VI

In the beginning of March, 1508, Michelangelo returned to Florence from Bologna. He established himself on the eighth in the spacious and convenient work-shop in the Borgo Pinti, built under the direction of Cronaca at the cost of the office of Works of the Cathedral, in which it was originally intended that he should execute the statues of the twelve Apostles to be erected in Sta Maria del Fiore.

The works which he had left in an unfinished state when he was summoned to Bologna, were the two circular reliefs of the Virgin and Child, the model of the David originally intended to be presented by the Signory to the Marshal Gié, and in all probability the beautiful group of the Madonna and Child commenced at Rome, and which now adorns the city of Bruges. The statues of the Apostles for the Cathedral were not proceeded with, but no reason is assigned. Possibly Michelangelo disliked to execute statues to be committed to the obscurity of the Cathedral of Florence. An unfinished work of his now exists in that

church behind the high altar, where, owing to the shade in which it rests, it cannot be appreciated. The powerfully coloured painted windows, which were there in Michelangelo's time, as they are now, so darken the Church, that it is quite unfitted for the exhibition of works of art; and this may have influenced him, although, as has been already mentioned, he had commenced one statue, St Mark, remarkable for its exaggerated action and quite unlike any of his previous works. It may have been that he hoped by this means to counteract the effect of the lowering of the light by the glass. The commission for small statues for the altar of the Piccolomini, for which an advance had been made, must also have claimed his attention, and the mural picture in the palace of the Signory, for which he had prepared his magnificent Cartoon, was still before him.

There can be no doubt that he tried to realize his earnest wish to settle in the city which he loved best, near his family and his devoted friends, far from the rivalries of Rome and the malignant persecutions which embittered his existence there. Nor is it to be overlooked that in Florence he breathed a pure and healthy atmosphere instead of the Malaria of Rome, to which his letters allude, and from the effects of which if he escaped, others whose services were needful to him, did not.

With his mind fixed upon his return to Florence, to his family and to his work, he lived in Bologna a life of penury and discomfort. Hardly had he realized his purpose and settled himself as he desired, when Pope Julius required his presence in Rome. In striking contrast with his previous conduct, when so summoned he at once obeyed, broke up his establishment, again left his commissions, thus sacrificing his most cherished purposes and hopes. He quitted Florence with saddened feelings, for he had experience how little his own government could protect

him, if he again attempted to disobey the mandate of the Pontiff. Before he left Florence, his father did him an act of justice by emancipating him from that paternal authority and those rights over his person and property, which the law at that time enforced. Michelangelo was then thirty-three years old, and this is the record which, it may he said, declared him of age. « Ludovicus Leonardi Bonarroti de Simonis, citizen of Florence emancipated Michaelem Angelum his legitimate son by instrument drawn up by the hand of Ser Johannis son of Ser Marci de Romena, notary and citizen of Florence on this day the 13th of March 1507. » Or as now computed 1508.[1]

This transaction in no way altered Michelangelo's disposition to aid his father and family, nor did it diminish the sacrifices, which he made on their account.

On arriving in Rome and on seeing the Pope, Michelangelo was at once made aware that he had not been summoned to work upon the monument, but to paint in fresco the vault of the Sixtine Chapel in the Vatican, the sculptor remonstrated, « painting was not his profession » to use his own words, and he earnestly recommended that the commission should be given to Raffael d'Urbino. The Pope was not to be moved by the artist's objections; he must have known that Michelangelo had consented to paint in the Palace of the Signory in competition with Leonardo da Vinci, and have heard of the fame of the Cartoon, admitted to be the must perfect work of design of the time. Whatever the nature or the motives of Michelangelo's objections or scruples, they gave way before the resolution of the Pontiff, and he accepted the Commission.

[1] Under the date of the 28th March 1508 the following entry occurs. Ludovicus Leonardi Bonarroti de Simonis civis Florentinus emancipavit Michaelem Angelum ejus filium legiptimum et naturalem per instrumentum inde confectum manu Ser Johannis Ser Marci de Romena notarii et civis Florentini sub die Martii 1507. (Florentine computation). State Archives, Florence.

The following is the account, which at a much later period he wrote to his friend Giovanni Francesco Fattucci, of this transaction:

« And having returned to Rome, Pope Julius would not yet that I should execute the sepulchre, but set me to paint the vault of Sixtus, and made a bargain with me for three thousand ducats: the first design for the said work was to be twelve Apostles in the lunettes, the rest in certain compartments filled with ornament in the usual manner: after having begun that work, it seemed to me that it would prove a poor thing, and I said to the Pope that to represent the Apostles only it would prove a poor thing; he asked me why: I said to him, because they were poor also. Then he gave me a new commission that I should do what I pleased, and that he would satisfy me, and that I should also paint the histories below. »

When it was determined that Michelangelo should paint the vault, the architect Bramante was instructed by the Pope to erect the requisite scaffold. He did so without consulting the artist, and suspended the floor by ropes, which he passed through holes, which he made in the vault. Upon seeing this contrivance, Michelangelo asked him how he should fill up those holes, when he had painted the frescos and pointed out generally the unsuitableness of the scaffold for its purpose. Bramante, who exhibited both incapacity and a bad temper, refused to allow any alteration, and Michelangelo was obliged to make a personal application to the Pope, who authorized him to erect a new scaffold. It was then that he for the first time showed his constructive ability, and no doubt derived advantage from the study and remarkable drawing, which, with precocious force of intelligence and observation, he made in Sta Maria Novella, when an apprentice

in the service of Domenico and David Ghirlandaio. The scaffold, which he erected with so much skill, became a model for architects, whilst the rope materials of that which he took down, being sold, provided a dowry for the contractor's daughter. [1]

It has been supposed by a modern writer that this scaffold was the original of the movable wooden towers used in St Peters, but this cannot be the case. Michelangelo required a complete deck the size of the chapel, about which he could move freely, and as the windows were below its level, he had to provide for the free passage of light, and for the temporary removal of part of the deck to allow him to examine his work from the Chapel floor. On this deck he must have placed portable scaffolds of different altitudes to enable him to reach the surface of the vault which rises above the cornice with unequal curvature.

The erection of these scaffolds, including the taking down of that of Bramante, must have taken some time; it is apparent that great expedition was used, for the plastering of the vault was commenced probably about the beginning of May, and Michelangelo had arrived in Rome at the end of March or the beginning of April.

As the plastering could not be executed without a scaffold, that erected by Michelangelo must have been used, the first payment for plastering having been made by him on the 11th of May 1508. This date is of importance, as it has been generally assumed that Michelangelo began to paint in the Sixtine Chapel on the 10th of May.

The following is an abbreviated translation of Vasari's picturesque account of Michelangelo's proceedings, which has usually

[1] Archivio Storico Italiano. Third Series, V. VI, p. 187. « Julius II, 13 Oct, 1508: Dominico Manini fiorentino pro nonnullis cordis ex canapatio per eum datis sacriste capelle sacri palatii fl 2. 6. 9 » (Notes of art from the secret Archives of the Vatican).

The extraordinary rapidity with which the scaffold erected was taken down and that of Michelangelo put up in its place, suggests that Michelangelo may have arrested the progress of that of Bramante, but the great quantity of rope used refutes this supposition.

been followed by other Biographers. Having related the story of the two scaffolds, he then makes the following statement.

« Michelangelo began to make the cartoons for the vault, and, excited by the greatness of the enterprize, he resolved to secure assistance, and having commenced and finished the cartoons, and wishing these to be coloured in fresco, and not having painted in that way, there came from Florence certain friends of his, artists, who might assist him, and that he might observe their manner of working in fresco, in which some of them were experienced, amongst whom were il Granaccio, Giuliano Bugiardini, l'Indaco vecchio, Agnolo di Donnino and Aristotile, and making a beginning of the work, he caused them to execute some things as specimens. But finding their work far from his wishes, and not being satisfied, one morning he resolved to break it all down, and, shutting himself up in the Chapel, he would not let them in, nor would he see them even in his house. So they left and returned to Florence, and Michelangelo undertook to execute that work alone. » In a note appended to this account of Vasari's, the Editors of the Le Monnier's excellent edition observe. « Michelangelo began the paintings of the vault of the Cappella Sistina on the 10th of May 1508, as he has himself written. »

It is now certain that Michelangelo went to Rome at the end of March or the beginning of April, and if the above history and the comment made upon it be accurate, then one scaffold one hundred and thirty feet long, forty-five feet wide, and fifty feet above the pavement must have been erected, taken down again and replaced by another of similar proportions, two general designs must have been made for the Pope's inspection and judgment, cartoons prepared, as described by Vasari, an important

negotiation entered into with Florentine artists and completed, and those artists brought to Rome. A commencement of fresco painting made by them in the Chapel, their tentative work destroyed and Michelangelo's famous solitary enterprize entered upon on the tenth of May, about six weeks after his arrival in Rome! In addition, it is now also known that the « arricciatura » that is to say the rough casting or preparatory coat of plaster, always laid before the finishing coat, was not in existence and was only begun after the second scaffold was erected. It is a well known principle in plastering that this rough coat must be thoroughly dry before the finishing coat is applied; not less than a month is usual in Italy, although in the hot season on an emergency, this might be abbreviated to one half the time.

The following is the note under Michelangelo's hand, which is trusted to, for the theory of his commencement of his interesting work in the Sixtine on the 10th of May.

« I make entry that this day the tenth of May, one thousand five hundred and eight, I, Michelagnelo Sculptor, have received from His Holiness Pope Julius, five hundred ducats full weight, the which were paid to me by Messer Charlino Chamberlain and Messer Carlo degli Albizzi, on account of the painting of the vault of the Chapel of Pope Sixtus, for which I begin to day to work, with these conditions and agreements, as set forth in a deed written by the most Reverend Monsignor di Pavia signed by my hand. » [1]

It is assumed that the expression « for which I begin this day to work » means, that Michelangelo began to paint in the Sixtine, but he used a still stronger expression in his letter to Fattucci regarding the first design for the twelve Apostles « after

[1] Memorie di Belle arti, Gualandi V. II, p. 154.

having begun that work, it appeared to me a poor thing.»[1] It seems obvious that in both expressions he alludes to the preparation of designs, and in his memorandum of the 10th May, not only the preparation of designs, but the multifarious business arrangements which preceded his great undertaking, such as the preparation of working drawings, the engagement of assistants, the purchase of colours, the first plastering of the vault not yet rough coated. Thus we find him writing to Florence on the 13th of May for certain blues, which he required.

«Frate Iacopo. I, being about to cause to be painted certain things here or to paint them, it occurs to me to let you know that I have need of a certain quantity of beautiful blues, and if you can serve me through your Brethren here with the quantity which you have, of fine quality and at a just price, before taking it I will pay you here or there as you prefer.»[2]

The thirteenth day of May 1508.

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO
Sculptor Rome.

To Fra Jacopo Gesuato
Florence.

This letter written on the thirteenth describes the painting as yet being in the future, distinctly alludes to assistance, and to his personal intention of painting also.

The next important document bearing on this subject is a series of receipts written on one sheet of paper by Piero di Iacopo Roselli, Master mason, employed to plaster the Vault of the Sixtine. The first is thus expressed:

[1] Buonarroti Archives.
[2] Buonarroti Archives.

† In the name of God the 11th day of May 1508.

« I, Piero di Iacopo Roselli, Master mason, have this day received, the 11th of May as above said, from Michelangelo Bonaroti Sculptor ten ducats in gold full weight, on account of scialbatura on the vault of Pope Sixtus, and for rough plastering in the Chapel and doing that which was needful by order of Pope Julius, and in faith of the truth I have done this with my own hand this day above said.[1] Ducats 10 of gold full weight. »

It has been somewhat hastily assumed that because « scialbatura » means also « intonaco » or finishing coat for painting upon, that consequently this account shows that it was laid for the use of Michelangelo. As however in the month of May intonaco could only be laid with safety over rough coat after fifteen days drying, the word must mean something else, and as it also means pointing or filling the joints between the bricks before plastering, its presence in the account is easily understood and has nothing whatever to do with the finishing coat. Being mentioned only once in the account, it shows that the whole vault was pointed before it was rough plastered, so that it may be inferred, that by this time or before the tenth of May the whole of Michelangelo's scaffold was up, showing great expedition, and that no time was lost.

Michelangelo had signed his contract, and had been put in funds the day before. He then began to work for the Chapel, and his first payment was to Roselli for rough plastering previously ordered by the Pope. As it was not the least likely that he would commit himself to artist assistants before his contract was signed, he must have sent for them after the tenth of May. In Roselli's receipts we find that the first payment

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

was made by Michelangelo himself. The second for fifteen ducats was made on the 24th of May by «Francesco Granacci» one of the artist assistants, and who therefore was in Rome at this date and in the service of Michelangelo. The next payment of ten ducats was likewise made by Granacci on the third of June, [1] and a further payment was made by him on the 10th, of another instalment of ten ducats.

On the 17th of July the payment of the usual ten ducats was made by Michelangelo in person. The inference is that Granacci had left Rome by that time. On the 27th July, Michelangelo finally paid to Roselli for rough plastering (all the bills except the first are exclusively for this process) thirty golden ducats full weight, which sum included also some other expenses. The amount paid and the time occupied show that this plastering included the whole vault.

Francisco Granacci, Michelangelo's old friend, had evidently been summoned to Rome to assist and to consult, and after the third of June he returned to Florence to engage assistants. This seems to be the only interpretation, which can be put upon the following letters. They are ill written, literally unintelligible in parts but their gist is rendered.

The first is dated the twenty-second of July 1508, and is descriptive of Granacci's transactions with artists willing to assist in the Sixtine.

« Very dear friend. I recommend myself and wish you infinite health. This is to your excellency, as to day I met Raf-

[1] The Plasterers must have commenced operations so soon, as enough of Michelangelo's scaffold was ready to allow them to do so. By the above receipts it may be observed that they could plaster enough of the vault to be entitled to a payment of ten ducats in from seven to ten days. Consequently Bramante's Scaffold must have been put up and taken down and at least part of Michelangelo's erected in the month of April, as Roselli received ten ducats for that value of plastering on the 11th of May. It is quite obvious that with such operations in progress, Plasterers, Labourers, Carpenters at work, materials being brought in and the confusion noise and dust usual, Michelangelo could not shut himself up alone to paint on the 10th May.

faelino the painter, and gathered from him in fine, that if you have need of him he will come at your bidding, should you be pleased to pay him the salary, which he has received from the Master Pietro Matteo d'Amelia, who he says gave him ten ducats a month. Ever faithful to your excellency, I give this advice as from myself. If you have need to employ him, offer him your amount of salary, he is ready to do what you may command as to work. He is a good Master and honest.

And if for me, there is anything, advise me, for I am always here to do for you those things, which are useful and honourable.... If I can do more one thing than another let me know, I will do it with love and solicitude. Nothing more. Christ have you in his keeping. Bene valete. »

This day 22d of July 1508.

Yours

FRANCESCO GRANACCI.

« If you can employ me as above is said, I shall be willing to be with you. Nothing more. »

GIOVANNI MICHI
San Lorenzo Florence
(Faithful service and honest man).

Directed to the Excellent Master
Michelagnolo, Florentine. At
St Peters, Sculptor
Rome. [1]

Given from the Bank of Baldassarre Balducci in Campo di Fiore.

In this letter towards the end of July two artists offer their services, Raffaellino del Garbo and Giovanni Michi, neither of whom was employed. The next letter is dated 24th July 1508.

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

« Very dear friend. As was said in the letter, I delayed so long in sending it, believing that your Pietro Basso would come, as he said, by monday at the farthest: for saturday, I was not in time to give him the letter, and I write to you again this morning monday, because I know not what your father has written. I know that I have made an error, and in this matter I do not wish to err further. Any how I did not go with any one for money, nor did I intend to go but at the proper time, as probably Ludovico might believe that I would take it.

I know that he was troubled about it, for he believed that we should mount on horses immediately, but they say that they must settle their affairs first, and it is impossible to start so soon and the time of payment is fixed for Easter. Chiefly Giuliano (Il Buggiardini) and Jacopo (L'Indaco) wish to be paid in advance, and to have a pledge and security for their work. It would please Jacopo to know what addition will be made to his salary, as he could not speak of it with you. And I showed him your letter, which I should trust to, without payment. He said that he had sometimes to combat with agents, who exacted more than their employer. » The retort of Granacci is not intelligible, but appears to be of no consequence. « I have not spoken with others, but it seems to me that Agniolo di Donnino is praised for his frescos. If you have need of anything, let me know. I shall do nothing till I have your reply, and in the mean time I may learn something. I would any how start should I go alone with Bastiano (da Sangallo), nothing else occurs to me; done since two days. God preserve you. »

Yours

FRANCESCO GRANACCI

in Florence. [1]

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

This is as near as possible to the sense of Granacci's letter; by it and by the previous letter it is made evident that the artists to be employed as assistants in the Sixtine, instead of being in Rome the end of April or beginning of May, were still in Florence towards the end of July, and some of them were haggling over terms with Granacci, whose difficulties were probably settled by Michelangelo himself, for there can be no doubt that he was in Florence in August, as is thus recorded by a document preserved in the national archives, to the following effect:

[1] «In the year of our Lord 1508 on the 11th day of August Michelangelo the son of Ludovico Lionardo di Bonarroto cancelled his lawful claim upon the estate of his uncle Francis by a deed drawn up by Ser Giovanni di Guasparre da Montevarchi[2] Florentine notary, on the 27th of the month of July 1508.»[3]

Upon Michelangelo's return to Rome, he prepared, and it is to be presumed, forwarded to Florence, a contract with the artists to be employed, of which the following although fragmentary, is very explicit:

« Under these conditions, when they shall be here and shall be in agreement with us, the said twenty ducats each, which they shall have received, shall go to account of salary; the said salary beginning from the day on which they shall leave Flo-

[1] Archives of the State Florence. Book of renunciations from 1504 to 1508 folio 157 on the reverse. Anno Domini 1508 die XI mensis Augusti. Michelangelus Ludovici Lionardi de Bonarrotis repudiavit haereditatem Francisci ejus patrui per instrumentum inde confectum Ser Johannis Guasparis de Montevarchis notarii Florentini sub die 27 mensis Julii 1508.

[2] Father of the celebrated historian Benedetto Varchi.

[3] This document was certainly executed in Florence by Michelangelo in person. I obtained legal opinions on this point it seemed so important.

rence to come here. And should they not be in accord with us, one half of the said money shall be theirs for their expenses in coming here and for time. »

This document evidently was written in Rome in all probability in August. It is reasonable to suppose that the assistants proceded at once to Rome, and commenced painting in the Sixtine towards the end of that month or the beginning of September.

From documents it appears that when in Florence Michelangelo had with his usual kindness and generosity made arrangements for the benefit of his brothers, which were met upon their part, as was too frequently the case, with ingratitude. Thus at the commencement of the painting of the vault of the Sixtine the mind of the great artist was disturbed, and his peace invaded by the dissensions which occurred in his family, of which he received an account from his father, to whom he wrote in August:

« Revered father, I have learnt by your last the state of affairs with you, and how Giovansimone behaves himself. I have not received worse news for ten years, than those contained in your letter. I thought, that I had arranged their affairs so, that with my aid they had reason to hope they would make a good business.... now I see that they act otherwise, especially Giovansimone, and that it is vain to try to do him good. Had it been possible on the day when I received your letter, I should have mounted on horseback, and by this time should have settled everything. But not being able to do this, I write such a letter to him as appears to me necessary, and if from this time he does not change his nature, or if he takes from the house so much as a withered twig or does anything to displease you, let me know and I shall obtain the Pope's permission to visit Florence, when I will show him his error.

You may feel assured that all the labour which I have endured, has been more for your sake than for my own, and the property which I have purchased, has been for you, whilst you live. Had you not been living, I should not have bought it.

Therefore if it please you to let the house or the farm, do so; and with the income and with what I shall give you, you will live like a gentleman. I would say come and live with me here, were it not the summer; here in summer you would not live long. It has occurred to me to take from him (Giovansimone) the money, which he has on the shop, and to give it to Gismondo, so that he and Buonarroto may get on together as well as they can..... »

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO
Rome. [1]

The rest of the letter refers further to family affairs of little interest now, except that they disquieted Michelangelo. His letter to his brother Giovansimone, to which he refers, is eminently characteristic.

Rome August 1508.

« Giovansimone, it is said that whoever benefits a good man, makes him better; but to benefit a bad man, is to make him worse. I have tried now for some years with good words and deeds to induce thee to live in peace with my father and with us, and thou becomest altogether worse. I do not say to thee thou art a bad fellow, but thou art such that thou greatly displeasest me, and the others. I could say much to thee as to thy conduct, but this would seem mere words to thee, like other advice given thee. To be brief then, I tell thee that thou art nothing in the

[1] Buonarroti MSS. British Museum.

world. Thy house room and expenses I give thee and have given thee for long for the love of God, thinking thee to be my brother like the others; now I am certain that thou art no brother of mine, for if thou wert, thou wouldst not menace my father. Thus thou art a brute and as a brute I will treat thee. Know that any one who menaces or strikes his father is held to risk his life. Enough — I tell thee that thou hast nothing in this world, and if I hear even the smallest instance of thy misconduct, I shall come by post to Florence and show thee thine error, and teach thee what it costs to destroy thy things or to set fire to houses or farms; if I come, I will show thee that, which shall make thee weep with burning tears, and thou shalt learn on what thou hast set thy pride. I have yet this once more to say to thee, that, if thou triest to do well and to honour and revere thy father, I will aid thee like the others, and will provide for thee in good time a place of business; but if thou dost not, then shall I be there and shall so settle thine affairs, that thou shalt better know what thou art than thou hast ever done before, and thou shalt know what thou really hast wherever thou goest. I say no more, what is wanting in words I will supply with deeds. »

MICHELAGNIOLO
in Rome.

« I cannot do less than add two sentences and these are, that I have not wandered about all Italy, nor borne every mortification, suffered hardship, lacerated my body with hard labour, placed my life on a thousand dangers, but to aid my family, and now that I have begun to raise it somewhat, thou alone art that one to embroil and ruin in an hour that, which I have laboured so many years to do, by the Body of Christ, but it shall

be found true, that I shall confound ten thousand such as thou art if it be needful, be wise and tempt not one who has already too much to bear. »

This outburst places Michelangelo before us in all the grandeur of his character. It explains the motives for his extraordinary self denial. It shows what were his own feelings regarding his absence from his native state, and his sense of what he was called upon to endure in Rome, yet if at this period of his life his heart turned with longings towards his beloved Florence, he was destined to experience disappointment there also, and that his life might be embittered by hostile rivalries in the latter, as in the former city.

These letters and many others show what the artist was called upon to endure whilst engaged upon the frescos of the Sixtine, his eloquent and burning words describe his sufferings, but these wonderful creations are the best evidence that his genius rose above his sorrows.

Riverting to Vasari's history, his statement, which was supported by his own experience, that Michelangelo « commenced and finished his Cartoons » the first important operation required for commencing the work, is brought within the bounds of possibility. The great artist had time between the tenth of May, when « he began to work » and the month of August to make the requisite preparations for an undertaking, of which, as the same author justly states, he fully estimated the importance and grandeur, resolving to make it one of the most perfect works of painting ever executed.

As Michelangelo intended to employ assistants, it was needful to prepare designs and working drawings for them to work from in the usual manner. A modern master in the same position would also provide coloured studies for the guidance of his as-

sistants. This does not appear to have been common amongst the great masters of the sixteenth century; no such coloured sketches remain, although Cartoons have been preserved. Michelangelo provided sketches executed in chalk showing the chiaroscuro, and full sized outlines for transfer to the vault, and he must have trusted to verbal instructions for the colour, and to his own example. He had also to prepare and lay off the general plan of the architectural division of the vault in conformity with his design, this frame work must have been designed and drawn to scale, and marked off upon the vault before the painting could be commenced. The completed work shows how great were the pains which were taken, how accurate the calculations and measurements must have been, before the scheme was matured. The more the vault and its paintings are studied, the more the real marvels of their history will be appreciated and distinguished from the paltry legends of the biographers.

Michelangelo's plan of assistance failed. He had not like Raffael, formed a school, for he had not the opportunity of doing so, « painting not being his profession. » Thus instead of a body of pupils trained to design and paint in harmony with his ideas and style, he brought together fortuitously several artists, nearly of his own age, one of whom was as old if not older and educated in the primitive school, from the principles and practice of which his powerful and original genius had broken, and from which he was entirely separated. He requested these artists to colour from his cartoons, which he had carefully prepared, and he must have seen at a glance, on the very first day of the experiment, that in the nature of things it could not succeed. They might be skilful frescanti and good artists, but their styles were diverse, and essentially discordant with his own. Any hope of harmonious and combined work must have been seen

at once to be vain. Indeed they must have seen it themselves, as they looked on the grand style of the sketches and cartoons of Michelangelo, which, when painted by himself and exhibited a few months afterwards, were destined to effect such changes in art and even to revolutionize the ideas of Raffael d' Urbino. They doubtless entered upon their assigned tasks with timidity and soon understood that they could not pretend to vie with or satisfy the mighty intellect which had produced the designs before them, so far beyond the art of the time, or any thing which they could have supposed possible.

There can have been no occasion to shut the door against them or to treat them with any indignity. The conduct imputed to Michelangelo is inconsistent with that gentleness and consideration for others, which formed so great a part of his character. He was keen in rivalry, subject to violent gusts of passion and then acted and expressed himself intemperately, there was no cause now, and he had provided for the possibility of failure of the plan as shewn in the memorandum already quoted, and he probably desired Granacci, to settle with his friends, to pay them the ten ducats due to each, or any balance of it owing and doubtless dismissed them with courtesy. He then girded himself for his great task. It was in an exceptional sense only, that it has been said that he painted alone and unaided. It cannot be true, for in fresco painting on such a scale, solitary work is a practical impossibility. But this will be considered further on in this chapter.

Every detail relating to the execution of the greatest work of painting in the world has been thought of interest since the time of its execution, but it is strange, not that so many anecdotes have been disseminated regarding Michelangelo's operations, but that so little pains should have been taken to verify them, when it was comparatively easy to have done so. A desire

was manifested to give a marvellous recital of the circumstances attending the commencement and progress of the work, and above all of the solitariness of the artist and his refusal of all aid, even in practical processes and services involving a needless waste of time and exertion. Some of the anecdotes are calculated rather to diminish, than to enhance his fame, and sacrifice his character for dignity and good sense. His fame rests upon the work itself divested of fictitious elements with which its history has been surrounded. The stories for instance, that he ground his own colours and prepared the lime to paint upon, although so often repeated, are manifestly absurd. He required hundred weights of colour and lime to cover more than ten thousand square feet of surface. How could he possibly prepare the quantity required, alone and unaided. These stories are an insult to his memory. In it will be found a history far more marvellous, than any which has been written, but whilst the great artist's proceedings and reputation have been veiled under idle tales by his first biographers, since so frequently repeated, his greatest work is also veiled by the barbarous neglect and maltreatment to which it has been exposed, and it is now seen from the floor of the chapel so imperfectly, that his purposes in the design and his execution of it cannot be properly appreciated. This is possible, only by close observation of the frescos from a position as elevated as the scaffold erected by Michelangelo. Under very favourable circumstances such an examination has been made of a portion of the vault, and the interest which this great work of genius has excited for centuries, and now excites perhaps more than ever, may it is hoped, be an excuse for giving the results of the examination with some minuteness of detail.

Fresco paintings, when closely and accurately examined, reveal not only the methodical procedure of the artist, but also the

preparatory steps taken before commencing to paint. A close inspection of the vault not only shows what was the nature of the preparations which were made by Michelangelo, but also that notwithstanding the fact that it was his first work, no signs of inexperience can be detected and that it is as prefect in technical execution, as it is great in design.

The famous Sixtine Chapel is internally an oblong space measuring one hundred and thirty-one feet six inches in length, forty-five feet two and a half inches wide at the east end, that of the entrance from its vestibule the Sala Reggia, and forty-three feet two and a half inches at the other extremity, where the altar is placed. It is lighted by six round headed tall windows on each side, placed on a line of about thirty feet from the ground, and the lateral walls are each divided into six round headed spaces by three tiers of pilasters, which however are only painted, but have moulded capitals, their surfaces being decorated with Candelabra in chiaroscuro with gold grounds. Between the pilasters of the first tier the walls are coloured to represent alternately cloth of gold and cloth of silver hangings embroidered with the arms of Sixtus the IV, from whom the Chapel takes its name. Here upon the occasion of great church ceremonies the tapestries designed by Raffael were suspended. Between the pilasters of the second tier are the interesting frescos of scripture subjects, by Luca Signorelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Pietro Perugino, Sandro Botticelli and Cosimo Roselli, and at the door end, two by followers of Michelangelo, Enrico Fiammingo and Matteo da Leve from his designs. The west end is occupied by the fresco of the « Last Judgment » painted by Michelangelo in the reign of Paul III. On the third tier are the windows, on the spaces between which, Popes in full pontificals, are represented standing in niches. From the centres of these piers, the pendentives of the vaulted ceiling spring from

corbels, five on each side and one at each end with round headed spaces between, united with the pendentives by tympanums forming triangular and horizontal curved spaces.

The first and third tiers are crowned by moulded string courses, and the second by a narrow cornice of travertine projecting about fifteen inches from the wall. The vault has not been well constructed, its curves are irregular and the sectional lines viewed close to it are wavy, but this is not seen from the floor.

This vault with its pendentives and the lunettes between, form the field of Michelangelo's work. To understand the nature of his intentions, the architectural and decorative design may be considered apart from the figures placed in front of it. It represents a white marble edifice, the same form as the arched ceiling, pierced with nine rectangular openings, divided by bands of white marble, which spring from a richly moulded cornice, drawn and painted parallel to the sides and ends of the Chapel, at a short distance above the entering angles of the tympanums of the lunettes.

This cornice is supported by projecting piers represented in perspective, two in each pendentive, and each composed of a pedestal supporting two children, which carry the cornice on their heads, over which it breaks and projects also in perspective, the vanishing points of each pair, being within the central vertical line of the pendentive. A very beautiful architectural composition is the result of this skilful arrangement. The piers form niches, within which are white marble thrones placed on ledges supported by corbels. As the open panels, already adverted to above the cornice, are wider over the windows than they are over the thrones, these last are diminished in length by an attic on each side, whilst the larger panels touch the cornices at both extremities, and their area is four times that of the

smaller openings. The angles of the pendentives and the tops of the lunettes and windows are painted with archivolt mouldings, completing the design. The mouldings of the cornice are without decoration of any kind, but those of the tympanums are ornamented with acorns, in allusion to the heraldic bearings of the Della Rovere, and with shells alternating with the acorns.

The selection of subjects to be painted in the compartments of this architectural composition [1] was left to the unfettered judgment of Michelangelo, and they will be described further on under the heads of his design and colour. Having at last accepted the commission, how grandly characteristic it is of his genius, that he should at once have condemned the simple plan of decoration at first proposed by the Pontiff, much of which might have been painted for him by ornamentists, and that in so short a time, apparently in a few days or a week, he should have produced a design of so complicated a nature, and presenting so many difficulties in its execution. The entire composition contains three hundred and forty-three figures, varying in their proportions, infinite in invention, full of life and of movement. The vault is alive with figures of mighty beings the offspring of the exhaustless and noble inspiration of Michelangelo. They show how little his enemies comprehended him or were able to estimate his powers, when they urged that he should be employed as a painter, that they might witness his failure as they fondly hoped.

A careful examination of the frescos, shows that Michelangelo adhered throughout to his sketch. Unhappily it is lost, but it is easy to see that it sprang from his brain complete in every part. He cast his sorrow and his disappointment behind him, and seems to have determined that as his mallet and chisel had

[1] See his letter to G. F. Fattucci already quoted Buonarroti Archives.

been forcibly laid aside, he would do more in painting than had ever been done before, and excel all painters in the variety and invention of his work.

It is not to be understood that within that busy and agitating time, when he prepared to paint the Sixtine, and was so variously occupied, that in his first sketch he drew every figure and group as we now see them painted. But as in the sketch of the monument of Julius, every part of his subject was present to his mind, he indicated his general idea, placed groups and figures where he intended them to be in the finished work, shadowed forth the entire composition and from that first creation he never swerved. As the work went on, he designed all his subjects and figures with all their details, and finally gave them the forms, which we see.

In estimating the amount of labour which Michelangelo contemplated when he suggested a richer design, the proportions of the figures which he painted, ought to be considered. Those in the uppermost part of the vault measure from ten to twelve feet in height, with certain exceptions. The Prophets and Sybils would be nearly eighteen feet if erect, and the ancestors of our Lord in the lunettes are colossal. These proportions increased his difficulties and his labour, but he himself fixed them. In contemplating these great works, it is well to recall the artist's emphatic statement, that painting was not his profession. He had executed one small picture, when in the school of Ghirlandaio, when a mere boy. As a paid apprentice he assisted on the scaffold in Sta Maria Novella, but his personal work, being so young, must have been limited to enlarging drawings, grinding colours and such service as was expected from apprentice pupils. As he saw daily the processes of fresco painting, no doubt he became familiar with all the routine of work. It cannot however be shewn by any documentary evidence that he painted one

picture after he entered the Academy of Lorenzo the Magnificent to study sculpture, till he executed the oil painting of the Holy Family, now in the Tribune of the Florence Gallery.

His life hitherto has shown how completely his time was occupied by commissions for statues, which were so numerous that he has left some unfinished, whilst others were not begun. Till he painted in the Sixtine, his history is that of a sculptor, varied only by his picture for Angelo Doni and his grand Cartoon for the Signory of Florence. The story of the Cartoon made in Rome for a picture of St Francis, shows how little he was disposed to paint, but how readily he made designs for painters. His plea, that painting was not his profession, was just and consistent.

From sketches which remain by his hand, he first embodied his ideas on paper in figures on a very small scale; he appears to have made most of these in red or black chalk. He then summoned his model, and made a drawing from nature, in which the figure was in some cases about a foot in height, at other times larger. Some of these drawings are not much more than outlined, others are shaded and highly finished. Armenini as quoted by W. Ottley states, that he saw Michelangelo make a chalk drawing from a living model in half an hour, which would have occupied most artists a month. There may be some exaggeration here, but there can be no question of Michelangelo's marvellous powers of rapid work. It would appear from his sketches of draped figures, as well as from the finished paintings, that he provided costumes for his models. There are many slight details and accidents of fold, which must have been imitated from the reality.

His next process was to prepare his Cartoon or full sized working drawing, and a close examination of the frescos has placed it beyond doubt, that he used such Cartoons. It is a great loss to art that these have disappeared. Some, prepared at a

later period of his life for the frescos of the Pauline Chapel, are preserved at Naples and are said to be slightly executed. But this probably was not the case with those drawn for the Sixtine Chapel in the vigour of his age. They may not have been elaborated like that famous cartoon for the palace of the Signory at Florence, but doubtless they were noble drawings.

Artists most frequently transferred the outline of the Cartoon to the wet and yielding surface of the plaster by placing the former upon the latter, and then firmly passing over its lines with a point or stylus, which indented the plaster through the paper. Michelangelo preferred the process which is called pouncing. This can be seen in his frescos, and the small holes necessary to the operation are found in the Cartoons at Naples. The cartoons were nailed to the wall during the process, the nail holes are observable in the fresco of the « last Judgment » and in that of Ezekiel in one of the pendentives of the ceiling, an original nail still remains in its place close to this figure. Michelangelo's motive for avoiding the more usual method of pressing in the outline with the stylus through the paper is quite evident, he disliked the disturbance of the surface which it involves, which was inconsistent with his ideas of refinement of execution. But he did not therefore altogether reject the use of this instrument. When the outline was pounced, he appears to have passed round it with a point as sharp as a pen knife, so fine is the cut, and it is easily distinguished from the line pressed through paper for, besides its sharpness, the instrument has frequently broken out a morsel of lime, where the hand has stopped. He did not draw in the features in this manner, but marked in the muscles in the beautiful figure of Adam [1] and possibly in others. Evidently he varied his practice,

[1] See Drawing, the marks made by the stylus are indicated by fine dotted lines. The more coarsely dotted lines round the outline indicate the joinings in the plaster marking each days work.

ADAM
CEILING OF SIXTINE CHAPEL

PLATE 9.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

sometimes using it, sometimes omitting it.[1] Drapery he generally marked in with the point in very rapid sweeps and sometimes adhered to these lines, at others not.

Other great Masters of the art of fresco painting have been satisfied with very imperfect outlines, on which they painted beautiful figures perfectly drawn; what they could do, Michelangelo could do better. So far as could be observed, the groups of children on the piers have been painted without any outline at all, a single guiding perpendicular line ruled between them on the wet plaster sufficed to enable him to paint them at once in their places without other preparation.[2]

The architecture is outlined with the stylus and the lines are often carried over part of the figures. This is common in old frescos. It shows that subject and background were painted simultaneously, and this is very evident in Michelangelo's work, for he often cut the plaster away from his finished day's painting at some distance from the outline of the figure. Thus he avoided hardness of contour. The lesson is an important one, especially to modern fresco painters.

The plaster upon which he painted was brought to a very even and polished surface. Unfortunately there are many chips in it now, by which it is seen that it is pure white. It must therefore be composed of Roman lime and marble dust, as no sand would give so beautiful a surface, or show so white a substance where it is broken. It is evident that the plasterer employed was perfect in his business, for, besides the smoothness and admirable level of the intonaco, the points, which mark each day's work, are so fine that they can rarely be traced. The plaster at the present

[1] Although it may be to anticipate, it may be here stated that although Michelangelo adhered to his usual system of outline in the fresco of the Last Judgment, still there are a few figures in that picture in which he has departed from it and used the stylus combined with the Cartoon, but these are quite exceptional.

[2] Such was the appearance of those near which the scaffold was placed, but although it is likely that such was his general practice throughout, it cannot be asserted of those not closely examined.

time is hard and sound, except where it is torn into fissures by movements in the masonry, arising from obviously defective construction and possibly, partly from slight shocks of earthquake, which at rare intervals are felt at Rome.

From these mechanical details of Michelangelo's work, and from his preparations for outline, and his method of transferring the outline to the plaster, the transition to his manner of designing is natural. It is necessary to enter even upon mechanical details derived from close observation of his frescos, to show the conscientious nature of his procedure, and the prodigious amount of labour which he so courageously faced and carried out. The marvels of the reality of his labour far exceed those invented by his biographers.

No artist has suffered more from misrepresentations of his design by imitators, copyists and engravers, than Michelangelo. It has been presented to the world in many forms, which miss his beauties and exaggerate what are believed to be his defects. His art is based upon a close observation of nature. As the most accurate and scientific draughtsman who ever exsisted, so far as our knowledge and means of judgment go, he was in all his representations of the human frame, of whichever sex or age, intensely real, and he had a high sense of beauty of form, which he embodied with the purest taste. He obviously admired the evidence of might and power, and seems to have selected by preference models in which these attributes were present. His capacity to simulate motion excels that of all artists.

The figures which he drew, were instinct with life. Whatever the action, however difficult it might be in position or foreshortening, he preferred the most difficult, and he never faltered, nor failed to represent it with living force and truth.

He was a great master of expression, especially of a grand or noble character. In the figure of the Creator, power, bene-

volence, intellect and goodness are united with superhuman beauty. It is infinitely the noblest idea of God, which ever emanated from art. This is particularly felt when standing within a few feet of that wonderful fresco, the creation of Adam.

Prophets never were represented in forms of more dignity, and the Sybils are worthy to sit on thrones beside them. The angels near them are infinitely beautiful and spiritual. It is remarkable that in all the compositions they are represented as very young; apparently however they have been designed in this manner to preserve the preeminence of the principal figure, which could not properly be interfered with. It is felt how conscious the mind of Michelangelo was of the inspiration, the holiness, the faith of the beings whom he has represented. [1]

His powers of design are marvellously illustrated in the subjects painted in the panels of the arch of the vault. When these are seen in detail from a distance of a few feet, the real object of the artist is perceived, although obscured by the veil of dust, soot and cobweb which neglect has allowed to accumulate. The first pictures of the series of subjects are acts of creation. It is evident that Michelangelo did not intend these to be regarded as pictures framed in the openings which he has preserved, but as representations of mighty acts of power taking place in remote space far from us in time and removed to an infinite distance.

The Creator, whose form more than fills the opening although so far away, is therefore so vast that he touches the limits of creation with either hand. He is represented in action, for by

[1] It may be remarked that the superhuman expression given by Michelangelo to boy angels, and equally so by Raffael to similar spirits and to the Child Christ, is the result of the look of thought and the intense gravity, so far from the aspect of infancy, which they invariably give to such beings.

Many Masters high in art, miss this altogether; their angels are merely pretty babies with wings and are absurd, but the youthful angels of Michelangelo like those of Raphael are of a high order of intelligence, they instruct the prophets who listen eagerly to their words. It may be that the present idea is that the things of heaven are so far above human intelligence that the messengers lower themselves to the form of childhood, that they may be understood. This, apart from another reason assigned in the text, may account for the child angels teaching the Prophets.

no other means could the artist signify will; he spreads the palms of his hands, and light and darkness are separated. He blesses with outstretched hand the dry land, which has appeared at His bidding, and it is clothed with trees and the multitude of plants all perfect and « very good. » He creates the sun, moon and stars, and assigns them their places and movements with his pointed fingers. Accompanied by his ministering spirits, he is seen floating over the silent universe, and earth, sea and sky are filled with life. Then he creates man, and the scene is brought nearer to us. The benign Creator floats in air borne by Angels, one of whom of singular beauty gazes with wonder on the new being towards whom God advances the finger of his right hand, and the breath of life pervades the image of Himself. This triumph of Michelangelo's design is unequalled in art. At no period of its long history has the human form been represented with more beauty or a higher sense of the divine in man.

In the next scene of this history is shewn the creation of woman. Michelangelo had been impressed by a design of Jacopo della Quercia on the façade of St Petronio at Bologna; he gave it new and infinite grace and thus paid a tribute to the memory of an artist, whose genius he admired. Eve rises into life and her first act is that of adoration of her Creator. It was thus that Michelangelo typified woman's reverential nature. The subjects which follow are the temptation and fall, and Adam and Eve driven out into the unknown to follow their destiny. The sacrifice of Noah follows; not the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, as Vasari states. As it takes place before the deluge, Michelangelo may have represented an act of worship by the one faithful family remaining in the world before it entered the ark of safety.

The next picture is the deluge, full of pitiful episodes, a scene of utter wretchedness and misery, yet replete with human sym-

pathies. The ark, the only place of safety in the drowning world, is a dark mass with no opening any where. Some poor wretches have gathered on a projecting portion of it, — one tries to break into it with an axe — either to die of hunger and thirst, or to be washed from it by the increasing waves. A boat is filled with others, but those who struggle to enter it from the water overturn the frail refuge. Husbands strive to carry their wives to places of safety, whither others have fled before them; a son bears up his dying father; mothers shelter their children. This scene of woe is represented by Michelangelo, as if the advancing flood had washed away the wickedness of which it was the punishment. No doubt, Michelangelo might have designed this subject so as to preserve the figures of a larger scale, and might have depicted a single and heartbreaking episode of the tremendous event, but which to choose of all those, which with such fertility of invention he has painted? It would have been a loss to art, had he omitted one. He purposely reduced the scale of the figures, that he might depict all the scenes of suffering which rose before his imagination, Besides, it was the usual mode of representing the deluge to crowd it with figures. He made no mistake as to the size of the figures, for he prepared a general design for the entire vault, before he began to paint.

The last picture of the series represents Noah overcome with wine and sleeping, with his sons around him.

Having thus designed the unequalled series of the ceiling pictures, terminating with the sin and punishment of man, Michelangelo's next thought was to commemorate the promise of a Redeemer and Deliverer, and he invented the majestic forms of the Prophets and Sybils sitting on thrones and attended by Angels. The history and cycle of events and of inspired beings does not terminate with these. In the four angles of the vault there are typical deliverances of the Jewish people, and in the

lunettes and their angular ceilings the ancestors of Christ. These are not, as in older art, represented as a series of kings or heroes in the acts or deeds and in the costumes appertaining to their high estates, but many of them are family groups such as the painter saw in his walks about Rome. Some are engaged in study or in profound thought, reading or thinking of the Messiah, some with very humble or parental occupations typifying the station and life of Joseph and Mary.

Such are the historical and religious subjects. Besides these there are many other figures, his powers of design being inexhaustible. In his first drawing, the vault was to contain only the «twelve Apostles and ornament in the usual manner.» But Michelangelo's manner of ornamentation was unusual. His decorations were made up not of foliage and flowers, but of figures of men or women and children. The capitals of the piers which support the cornice are groups of children in pairs, which represent the sports and occupations of child life. Over the cornice instead of Acroteria, he has placed that wonderful and altogether unequalled series of youthful men, all in varied attitudes, yet the general lines of composition are regulated by the laws of ornament. The great artist seems to revel in the representation of beautiful forms, to give free reign to his imagination, and besides being ornamental, these figures are full of meaning. They are in succession pensive or gay, calm or agitated, ardent or inert, glowing, passionate, fervent, or frigid, lethargic and impassive.

Unsurpassably beautiful in their youthful athletic forms, they exhibit in their varied movements the vivacity and expressive action or the repose of the emotional people from amongst whom the models were selected. In the angles between the tympanums and the piers of the prophetic thrones, other ornamental figures are found balanced in pairs, in similar attitudes, according

to the rules of decorative design, and lastly beneath the feet of the Prophets and Sybils, male and female children (which are six feet high) bear aloft or stand under the tablets, on which the names are written of the figures above.

Such were the ornaments Michelangelo preferred and painted with his own hands. Had he employed a Giovanni da Udine, these and other spaces not filled with histories would have been left to the graceful, it may be, but unmeaning or incongruous fancy of such an assistant's mind and hand, and the grand series of religious subjects would have been framed in, with arabesques imitative of old Roman and pagan art, with dexterously painted foliage, with beasts, birds, reptiles and irrelevant even indecent devices. But the grand stern pure mind of Michelangelo, tolerated no such adventitious aids. From his first design, « Let there be light » to the last of the noble series, no common or vulgar thought finds entrance. Representing as he did sublime thoughts, he has shewn his own sublimity and greatness of mind. He was a worthy successor of the inspired beings who were the subjects of his unparalled powers of design.

The design of a great artist is tested by his treatment of drapery no less than by his drawing of the nude; Michelangelo's originality of mind and his taste are shewn in the manner in which he deals with drapery, as much as in the novelty of his great style of drawing the human figure.

In the Tuscan school a great advance had been made in the comprehension of a grand treatment of drapery before his time. Ghirlandaio was one of the artists who led the way in this improvement, and it is a singular testimony to the powers of observation of Michelangelo and to his diligent study during the year which he passed in the School of the Curradi, that he retained to a late period some peculiarities of his Master's design of drapery. Before Michelangelo, in all pictures of sacred

subjects, sacred characters were clad in a conventional costume based upon that of classic antiquity. A tunic close at the throat, tied in at the waist, and reaching to the ankles with long and rather wide sleeves, and above this a mantle, a modification of the toga, arranged in various ways about the person in ample and generally well drawn folds. In the sacred art of every people from the most ancient, beings which were the special objects of veneration or of adoration, have been invariably represented so as to be readily recognized by the people, and the principle has been adhered to in christian art at all times. On the other hand spectators or actors, in the scenes depicted, have most frequently been represented in the costume of the artist's own time, and the incongruity was entirely disregarded. Michelangelo neither imitated the costumes usually assigned to sacred personages nor did he introduce figures in modern dress. He invented modifications in which traces may be found of ideas taken from ancient art and modern costume, but arranged and adapted after a style of his own, unlike the methods of any of his predecessors.

Many details in his draped figures evidently drawn from the observation of the reality suggest as has been already observed, that he had costumes made for his models. He was not so fortunate as the artists of Greece who saw daily the most beautiful and graceful costumes ever worn by human beings, arranged with all the taste of civilized refinement, so he had much more to invent, in an age when costume was full of defects in form.

Modern artists, in continental countries especially, appear to have considered classic costume and drapery essential in religious and monumental art. Not so Michelangelo, his draperies like his drawing of the nude, are full of realism so much so that they approach at times the details of genre painting. He loves to display the forms as seen through the folds of the drapery,

carrying this to extreme, so that in some cases the cloth seems pasted to the shape. An observable peculiarity is that in the same figures parts of the drapery are in repose whilst others are agitated by wind. At all times there is a present sense of the ornamental principle in his representation of drapery, the sweeps, turns and convolutions being often those of the ornamentist. The presence of this decorative principle modifies the effect of that realism, which, but for this might seem inconsistent with the union of painting and architecture.

Before entering upon the subjects of Michelangelo's method of painting or principles of colour, the disposition of the chiaroscuro, which he has maintained throughout the whole of the frescos, must be noticed. The light proceeds from the painted apertures in the ceiling and falls with equal diffusion downwards on all sides. The horizontal shadows of the architecture are very precisely and decidedly marked, but the angular cast shadows are modified and softened because otherwise they would have confused with their sharp angles, the general decorative divisions of the design. On the other hand the shadows cast by the figures which sit in front of the white marble arch, with its piers cornice and moulding, are painted with Rembrandt-like vigour, and must at one time have given those figures complete relief against the bright and fair semblance of marble, now so dingy and so unlike what it has been.

The backgrounds in the lunettes are darker than those of the figures of the vault, as are the grounds of the merely ornamental figures in the angles above, and those below the Prophets and Sybils form a basement to the brilliant chiaroscuro of the arcade. The effect of chiaroscuro in the scenes in the open panels has been very aerial, increased by the powerful light and shade of the figures close to those openings. When first painted, the arrangement of the chiaroscuro must have produced

a brilliant effect, now entirely obscured, but which no doubt might still be in a great measure restored. Even at the risk of repetition it is needful to dwell upon the deplorable condition of the frescos of the Sixtine. The use of the Chapel for religious observances has been given up since Rome became the Capital of Italy, for the time being then, the further destruction of the greatest monument of painting in the world is arrested. It remains to be seen whether the Italians will honour their newly recovered liberties by providing for the safety and preservation of the works of their greatest artist. Judging by past experience it is perilous to suggest restoration, but the Italians are now alive to their misdeeds in this way, and they can fairly state that they were committed when public opinion was allowed no voice. It is to be hoped that under free institutions the precious monuments of art which they possess will be more cared for.

Chapter VII

Michelangelo's protest that painting was not his profession, and Vasari's account of the modest estimate of himself, which induced him to send for artists who might show him how to colour in fresco from his own cartoons, must always seem inconsistent with the readiness with which he entered into competition with Lionardo da Vinci in the hall of the palace of the Signory at Florence; whilst an examination of the frescos of the Sixtine Chapel clearly shows, that, although said to be so diffident, he had in reality no occasion for any teaching in the practical processes of fresco painting, for throughout the execution is masterly, and it is not surpassed, if it can be said to be equalled by any contemporary works. It is probable however that he at first encountered serious difficulties. In considering what may have been Michelangelo's real motives for bringing artists from Florence to paint with him in the Sixtine, it may be well to recall what he did, when he went to Bologna to model and to cast in bronze the colossal statue of Julius.

He took with him a Sculptor of eminence, a Master Bronzist, and another assistant. When he proposed to execute the monument of Julius in five years, he must have contemplated the employment of not less than ten sculptors with other assistants for minor parts.[1] What then more probable, that when he considered the extent of the work before him in the Sixtine, and, so far as he was personally concerned, its uncongenial nature, he should desire to surround himself with assistants as he saw Raffael surrounded, and he may have calculated that by this means he might sooner resume his chisels and mallet and return to the art which he loved.

The failure of the painters must have been a source of sorrow and mortification, but again under these adverse circumstances we see the grand nature of the man: he threw himself into the work with the prodigious energy characteristic of him, with conscientious diligence and earnestness of purpose. It appears that he encountered technical difficulties of a serious nature and for a brief space was discouraged, but again he resumed his brushes, and whatever may have been other obstacles which he met with, and that he did so is evident from his letters, there is now no sign of them, for every foot of that unequalled vault, which has been painted by his own hand, shows the same care and devotion to his duty, the same excellence from his first days painting to his last.[2]

[1] As the monument according to Condivi was to contain forty statues, but according to the design in the Florence Gallery many more, and as Michelangelo wrote that he proposed to finish it in five years, it is obvious that he contemplated the employment of many assistants. He would certainly have been as completely disappointed in these, as in the artists whom he wished to employ in the Sixtine.

[2] It is not assumed that Michelangelo did not begin to paint till the artists had failed, which appears to be the usual theory. He must have contemplated working with them, he says as much to Frate Iacopo, and how else could he keep the work together and preserve unity of effect and colour? It is much more natural and true to all experience to believe that from the beginning he meant to work himself surrounded by assistants. By the bargain that he made with them it is obvious that he saw possible failure of his plan, and it did fail, and then he threw himself into the work as related, not however utterly alone, he parted with most, but, as will be seen, not with all his assistants.

When the frescos are closely examined with a desire of observing Michelangelo's method of execution, attention is naturally directed in the first place to the undraped figures, as the chief tests of the artist's powers. It is apparent that the following was the mode of painting. The local colour was laid on, and modelled and softened into the cool shadow with that perfect knowledge of form and truth of gradation habitual to Michelangelo, and observable in all his drawings. The lights were then painted with a full brush and softened into the half tints. It might be thought that the vigorous draughtsman with some tendency to exaggeration of form, might exhibit a similar disposition in the use of the brush, but he painted in the soft Tuscan manner so much in contrast with his forcible drawing. The lights being completed as described, the darker parts of the shadows were added, but no tints resulting from the colours of surrounding objects were introduced into the reflections, or anything that might impair the simplicity of the monumental style and breadth of execution.

The heads and faces were painted with loving care and attention, the features being clearly outlined with dark fine lines to insure distinctness when seen from a distance. The countenances are full of a grand beauty, but there is no monotony arising from a special idealism or manner; on the contrary, their variety and truthfulness to high and beautiful types in nature are striking characteristics of Michelangelo's design in the frescos of the vault of the Sixtine. He never reproduced the same forms attitudes or expressions, but these are diversified as they are in nature, for his invention was boundless. He evidently employed a great number of models carefully chosen, there is not a single figure in that vast series of designs, which has not been studied from nature. Excepting, of course, those, which are merely decorative. Every detail of the figures is

drawn and painted with the same accuracy, and the hands especially are both beautiful and full of expression. The hair of the heads and beards is executed with taste and skill; it was first painted in a broad style without detail, then the lights on the locks were swept in with free ready and graceful touches of the brush, and finally the darker shadows in the same manner. The sculptor's feeling is observable in the general treatment and beauty of the tresses, which in some of the figures are motionless, in others are agitated by the passing wind.

The draperies are painted in a different manner from the nude parts, with much less finish, but very broadly and effectively, whilst the colour is transparent, the ground being seen through it.[1] The brush-marks are every where visible and suggestive of great rapidity of execution, whilst nothing can excel the certainty, decision and boldness of the handling.

It was frequently Michelangelo's practice to include portions of the background in his day's work; he evidently did so to insure softness of outline, at the same time it is to be remarked that the texture of the background is varied from that of the draperies. This attention of the great master to effects of surface is remarkable. The frescos seen from a distance of sixty feet might have been painted with less pains-taking in this respect, but Michelangelo's love of his art was satisfied only by the greatest perfection attainable, and this is the lesson which from his supremacy he offers to his brethren in art of all times.

In the feeling of admiration which the frescos excite, particularly when observed from a distance of a few feet, the question presents itself: did Michelangelo really paint every part of them

[1] In fresco there are examples of transparent as well as of solid painting. In the first the colour is not laid in repeated layers. Titian paints in fresco with a transparency allied to flimsiness. There are many gradations between his transparent wash and the solid painting of the artists of the Vatican. Report on Fresco painting C. H. Wilson, 1843.

alone and unaided, or is this one of the stories told by his early biographers, the truth of which melts away upon inquiry?

Upon comparing portions of the background close to the figures painted in his day's work by Michelangelo, with other parts of the architectural ornament, it is seen at once that he must have employed a practical decorator, as he manifestly did a skilled hand to print the inscriptions. But there is evidence of more important assistance than this, for, whilst Michelangelo's own work is bold and masterly, there are parts of the frescos executed by a less able and more timid artist. The feet of the prophet Ezekiel were closely examined, and not only are weak in form, but the colour both in the light and shade is cross hatched with the regularity of lithography. [1] The feet of the Sybil Erethrea and of Daniel were not seen so near, but notwithstanding it was evident that they were coloured by an assistant, and parts of the figures of the ancestors of Christ presented the same appearances. If the whole of the frescos could be closely examined, there can be little doubt that other indications of the work of assistants would be found. [2]

That by far the greater portions of the frescos were executed by Michelangelo himself, there can be no doubt whatever; but the assertion that he worked absolutely alone is manifestly untrue. A fresco painter cannot dispense with a body of trained assistants, especially in a work so extensive as that of the Six-

[1] Michelangelo's own work is as even and smooth in texture as oil painting. So much having been written of his inexperience, this is a very remarkable fact, for it is a method evidently acquired by most masters with difficulty and after continuous practice. The feet neatly painted with lines crossing each other both in the lights and shadows must be by another hand. It has been suggested that this cross hatching may be the result of retouching, but the lights are hatched as well as the shadows, and the colour is immoveable, therefore it is fresco. It has also been suggested that it was owing to the plaster being too dry, but it is far too elaborate to admit of this solution. The difference of handling admits only of one explanation, that of the text.

[2] To examine them closely all the furniture of the Chapel must be removed and a moveable scaffold erected on each side the screen; by this means only could every part be reached.

tine Chapel. Michelangelo was a man of sense, and it is not credible that he denied himself necessary aid in conducting his work. It has been shown for instance that, like other masters of the time, and notably Raffael, he preferred to pounce his outlines on the plaster; is it credible that he spent hours, perhaps days, pricking out the outlines of his cartoons with machine-like regularity? The theory of solitary work must suppose this, but the evidence of the frescos when closely examined, whilst bearing ample testimony to his prodigious skill and industry, at the same time demonstrates the good sense with which he conducted his work in conformity with usage and experience.

The colour of the frescos remains to be spoken of. They have been criticized as low in scale. This is true of their present state; but when first painted, they were forcible and brilliant.

The tone of the range of subjects seen through the open panels of the ceiling is delicate and aerial, the object having been to convey the idea of remoteness. They are clearly and firmly painted, and the aereal perspective is increased by direct contrast with the rich colours of the figures and ornaments above the cornices, which are painted with the warmth, richness and force of Titian. The skins of the figures are a dark sun burnt red, the hair black and the light and shade very powerful. The green of massive garlands of oak leaves and acorns, the lilac of pendants, ribbons, ties and medallion frames, the yellow of the medallions with reliefs on them shaded with warm brown and heightened with rich gilding, form the effect of colour and the magnificent decoration placed above the cornice. Beneath it the forcibly coloured groups of the Prophets and Sybils and their attendant spirits, relieve against the white marble masses of the arcade. In these groups the ornamental balance and repetition at fixed intervals of certain colours ceases and each is painted and

coloured as a separate picture, but with equal force of effect. [1] The impression which they must at one time have produced is now in a great measure lost from the accumulation of dust, soot and cobweb, with which they are defiled. But the powerful colour and light and shade of these figures, opposed to the pure white of the imitative marble, may yet be imagined and might possibly be restored, to prove that great as Michelangelo was as a designer, he was equally so as a colourist. It is not thus that he has been thought of, but regarding the use of colour in its connection with monumental art, as expressive of ideas and regulated by laws, differing from its employment in imitative art, then Michelangelo stands in the first rank as a colourist. Where similar principles are carried out in a subject representing a scene of real life, as in the Holy Family of the Tribune, then however harmonious the colours may be in their relation to each other, their conventionalism is felt to be out of place and too far from nature, the absence of atmosphere, of truthful reflections and the decorative treatment of a subject which is not a decoration or architectural embellishment, is displeasing.

But as in the Sixtine his instructions were to decorate the vault with a series of scripture subjects, whilst he has done so with an originality and power unparalleled in any existing work of art, his style both of design and colour was admirably adapted to the task imposed upon him. It is enough to appreciate its merits and value, to contrast it with the paintings on domes, vaults and ceilings of later realistic masters. The very truthfulness with which they designed and painted, and the resemblance to nature and costume which they aimed at, have made their works absurd and ridiculous in such positions. The Pontiffs

[1] An important principle is illustrated. In such a series the colour must vary, but the general effect of chiaroscuro must be the same throughout. If in a series of frescos along a wall, morning, noon, evening, night scenes are represented, the general effect ceases to be monumental, for all unity is destroyed.

and Sovereigns ascending through clouds to the central glory, clad in velvet and ermine, bearing tiaras and crowns, keys and sceptres, never suggested to a reasonable being any other than grotesque ideas. These Michelangelo entirely escapes. He has solved the problem placed before him with dignity and grandeur, and is impressive in spite of the position in which he was compelled to place his sacred personages.

It has been seen that Michelangelo began to paint in the autumn of 1508. He evidently experienced great difficulty in the commencement of his undertaking, and Vasari relates his despair when mould appeared on one of his pictures. The accident took place in the winter, for his expressions are « as I heard from himself, to clear this doubt, when he was painting the third, a certain mould began to arise, when it was blowing north wind in the winter » but his explanation of the cause of the mould is not satisfactory, he says that « it arose from the mixture of pozzolana with the lime made from travertine, » whereas the plaster upon which Michelangelo painted was mixed with marble dust. There follows a description of his despondency, but his own words are far more graphic. In a letter to his father of the twentieth of January 1509, he thus expresses himself. « I am still in great trouble, for it is now a year since I have had a groat [1] from this Pope, and I do not ask it, for my work does not make progress, so that it does not seem to me to merit it, and this is from the difficulty of the work and that it is not my profession. And I lose my time without reward; God help me. If you have need of money, go to the Governor of the Hospital and make him give you the amount of fifteen ducats, and let me know what remains. Jacopo the painter, whom I made to come here, has departed hence one of these days; he has complained here of my proceedings, and I think that he will complain in Florence. Be deaf to him; he

[1] About two pence half penny.

has done me a thousand wrongs, and I have to complain greatly of him. Do as if you saw nothing. Say to Buonarroto that I will answer him another time.» [1]

20th January 1509. [2]

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO
in Rome.

Although the date is written by another hand, this letter coincides too exactly with his first troubles, to make it doubtful when it was written. It is true that he says he had not received anything from the Pope for a year, whereas he had been paid five hundred ducats in May, but this is a mere general expression not intended to be absolutely accurate, a common method of speaking in frequent use.

Nothing can be more touching, than the manner in which he expresses himself, nothing more modest on the subject of his painting, with which he was so little satisfied, that he did not dare to ask for an advance on his contract. This letter also shows that he had not been alone and that all his Florentine assistants had not left; Iacopo l'Indaco had been with him till about that time from August, and this agrees with the observations, which have been made from the frescos, that Michelangelo did employ assistants. It would seem from the above letter that Pope Julius did not visit the artist at work till after some time had elapsed; Michelangelo's discouragement plainly

[1] Letter to his father British Museum Buonarroti MS. n. 81.

This letter clearly shows that for some time Michelangelo found the practice of fresco painting very difficult and it records failure in his own opinion. As there is no trace of such failure in the frescos, so far as they have been closely examined, it is probable that he broke down parts of his own work. His expressions are too explicit as to his sense of failure to admit of application to the admirable existing work. In considering the time during which he was occupied painting, this letter describing his early difficulties is quite opposed to the legend of twenty months spent in the execution of the frescos.

[2] The date is written by another hand, but is most propably accurate.

shows this, when at last His Holiness made his way to the scaffold, his admiration of the frescos must have been reassuring, and he began to express his desire that they should be shown to the people. It is related that Julius ascended to the scaffold by means of ladders arranged for the purpose, but his age and dress considered, this could hardly have been from the floor of the chapel, such a mode of ascent would have been undignified and dangerous. As there is a stair outside, which leads to the level of the cornice and as then a height of twelve feet could be easily surmounted by the aid of wooden steps, it is more reasonable to suppose that the Pope ascended in that commodious and simple way. He was received by the artist who respectfully held out his hand to assist, as the Pontiff surmounted the last steps. He cannot have been otherwise than gratified, as he contemplated the magnificent groups and figures then finished, and observed the admirable way in which they were executed and the brilliant colouring. We may sympathize with his earnest wish to show them to his people, both on account of their novelty and grandeur, and because they were such a testimony to his own good taste and discernment in pressing, as he had done, the commission on Michelangelo, whose doubts as to his success must have been modified by the sympathy and the admiration of the Pope, although he was not prompt in supplying the funds needful for the continuation of the work. Michelangelo had many accounts to pay for materials, to workmen and to assistants and they may have pressed him for payment. He writes to his father « I work as hard as I can. I have not had money from the Pope for thirteen months, I expect to be paid any how within a month and a half. Remember me to Ricasoli and to Messer Agniolo the Herald. »[1]

To add to his various annoyances, Michelangelo's domestic discomfort was great; his servant Pietro Basso was attacked by

[1] Buonarroti MS. British Museum, n. 5.

fever and he therefore insisted upon returning to Florence. As no satisfactory servant was to be found in Rome, he wrote to his father to look for a lad of respectable parentage, who would be content to render him services, and whom he would instruct in art during part of the day. The youth was quickly found but his parents, instead of sending him to Rome in an economical manner, despatched him under the care of a Muleteer, who charged Michelangelo an extravagant price for the journey, and his displeasure was increased when he found that his new servant and pupil was as foolish as his parents, and insisted upon drawing much more than had been bargained for. On this Michelangelo writes « now I have this useless boy who tells me that he does not wish to lose time, but must learn. Now they said there (at Florence) that two or three hours a day would be enough; now the day is not long enough, and he must draw even all night, such are the counsels of his father. If I said nothing to him, they would say that I did not wish him to learn. »[1] As the youth entered Michelangelo's service on a very different understanding, he was sent home again. The anecdote and letter are interesting on various accounts. Showing the straits to which Michelangelo was reduced, whilst engaged on his great work, and the shabby way in which he was treated; and showing also what relationship could then subsist between Master and Pupil, and the great Master's strict ideas of discipline.

Michelangelo in his letter to his father says that he has not had any money for thirteen months; the statement in this case is so precise that accepting its accuracy, the date of the letter must be June 1509. The payment which he was anxiously waiting for, was made at last, and he writes to his father on the fifteenth of September:

[1] Buonarroti MS. British Museum.

« Most revered father, I have given here three hundred and fifty ducats in gold, full weight to Giovanni Balducci, which may be paid to you at Florence. Therefore on receiving this present, go to Bonifazio Vati and he will pay them to you, that is, he will give you three hundred and fifty ducats in gold full weight; when you have received them, take them to the Governor of the Hospital and deposit them where you know I have other deposits. There is a balance of certain ducats which I wrote to you to take, if you had not already taken them, and if you have need of more, take what you require, whatever you have need of, I give you; if you expend it all and if you think that I should write to the Governor let me know. I understand by your last how the affair goes, I am greatly vexed. I cannot assist you otherwise, but do not be alarmed on that account, nor give place to the smallest amount of sadness, for if the property is lost, life is not. I shall give you more, than you will lose. But do not rely upon what is a doubtful matter, but do all that you can and thank God that since this tribulation had to come, it has come at a time, when you can stand it better than formerly. Try to live, and rather let the property go, than suffer discomfort; for you are dear to me in life although poor, and I would not for all the gold in the world that you should die; and if these chatterers or others blame you, let them talk; they are ungrateful men without affection. »

The 15th of September.

MICHELAGNIOLO
Sculptor in Rome.

« *P. S.* When you take the money to the Governor, take Buonarroto with you and neither of you speak to any one in the world that I send money, neither at this time or any other. » [1]

[1] Buonarroti MSS. British Museum, n. 48.

The father, to Michelangelo's great annoyance, had entered into a lawsuit, and it appears by this letter that it was going against him. How unwearied the goodness of the son!

The impatience of the Pope became more and more demonstrative and broke into threats of his severe displeasure, if Michelangelo did not open the Chapel and exhibit the portion of work, which he had already done, although as Condivi remarks « It was imperfect and he had not given it the last touches. » The scaffold therefore was taken down and the Chapel was opened to the public on all Saint's day the first of November 1509, or about sixteen months from the date of the commencement of the painting, assumed on the evidence of the letters of Granacci to have been in August 1508.

The expression « one half » is probably merely an arbitrary term to denote a portion of the frescos. It is highly probable that less than half is meant. Michelangelo alludes to this important event in a letter without date, but evidently written in October 1509. It is addressed to Buonarroto. « I learn by your last that you are all well, and that Ludovico has got another office.... I am here as usual, and I shall have finished my painting about the end of next week, that is that part of it which I commenced, and so soon as it is exhibited, I believe that I shall receive a payment and I shall ask permission to visit Florence. I have much need, for I am not very well. » [1]

All that were great and distinguished in Rome flocked to the Chapel to see the work about which there were such diverse expectations. Friends with undoubting faith to witness the artist's triumph, and enemies with apprehension, for they had prognosticated his failure; but the opinion held by the Pope of his success must by this time have been widely published.

[1] Letter to his father, British Museum n. 35.

Amongst the greatest of those who visited the Chapel was Raffael d'Urbino, and there can be no doubt that what he then saw, was the cause of a fresh impulse in his practice, for from that day in the opinion of his contemporaries he superadded to the style in which he had been trained, ideas derived from the art of Michelangelo.[1] This has frequently been debated as if it was a reproach to the great artist, but in the histories of men of genius similar tendencies to assimilation may be observed. The greater the capacity, the more instant and intense the perception of eccellence in the works of others, the greater the readiness to receive new seed into the fruitful soil, where it germinates and grows, with modifications due to the character of that soil. Thus was it with the ideas which Raffael derived from the art of Michelangelo. So was it with those which Niccolò Pisano borrowed from the ancients and grafted on his medieval inheritance, so was it with Michelangelo himself, who was impressed by the Etruscan, Greek and Roman fragments, which Lorenzo gathered into his garden at St Mark's. The sight of the frescos of the Sixtine ceiling awakened in Raffael d'Urbino the consciousness of a power within himself, which had been only dormant before that day. He was a great designer and draughtsman, a consummate colourist, accomplished in every branch of his art, exquisite in taste, and endowed with a rare perception of what constitutes the beautiful, and the art of his contemporary roused him to exertion in a new direction, to the embodiment of a grander ideal. He neither borrowed nor became a follower, he showed that he also could design with equal sublimity. He recognized the merit of his competi-

[1] At a later period Pope Julius in conversation with Sebastian del Piombo remarked: « Look at the work of Raffael, no sooner did he see that of Michelangelo, than he immediately abandoned the style of Perugino and, as much as he could, approached that of Michelangelo. » Such was the remark of a contemporary and an excellent judge of art.

Buonarroti Archives, Letter of Sebastian del Piombo to Michelangelo, 15th October 1512 published also by Gaye, V. II, p. 487.

tor, fully acknowledged it and openly and at once whilst all men were talking of it, began to design in the same manner.

A painful episode now occurred in the relations of the two great artists. Condivi narrates that Raffael moved Bramante to appeal to the Pope to permit him to complete the remaining half of the work. Vasari does not allude to Raffael's participation in this monstrous proposal. "There is no baser story in the history of art, than that Bramante, hating Michelangelo, urged the Pope to employ him as a painter that all men might witness his failure. When this anticipation was falsified, when he saw the magnificent work of Michelangelo, and heard around him the echos of the universal expression of admiration, instead of awakening to a more generous sense of the merits of the noble artist, his hatred deepened, and he made the shameful proposal that Michelangelo should be deprived of the rest of the commission. It is difficult to believe that Raffael had in reality any thing to do with this intrigue, and when Michelangelo confronted Bramante in the presence of the Pope and denounced his conduct he made no allusion to Raffael; he was not a man to conceal his sentiments, he was open in the declaration of them even to a fault, and it says much that he limited his complaint to the conduct of Bramante. It has been already seen what latitude the Pope permitted to the artists with whom he surrounded himself, both in their manner of speaking in his presence and of addressing him personally. Michelangelo complained with fiery words of the injury proposed to be done to him, he had been long aware of Bramante's destruction of ancient monuments, and he said. « The man who acts thus by me is the architect, who intrusted with the demolition of ancient St Peter's, has in his ignorance thrown to the ground and broken the marvellous and beautiful ancient marble columns of that temple, caring not for them and incapable of appreciating their rarity,

whereas if he had possessed the commonest skill, he might have preserved them entire, but he only shows how he can pile up bricks, and has no idea of the difficulty of forming such columns as he has ruthlessly destroyed. »[1]

The Pope was not moved by the proposal of Bramante. There is no vestige of his observations upon what occured, but he confirmed Michelangelo in his commission.

It is not recorded when Michelangelo resumed his labours in the Sixtine. It had been thrown open to the public of Rome against his will by the ardent and impatient Pontiff, and whatever the admiration which it excited, it had exposed the artist to the machinations of his enemies and his sensitive nature to needless sufferings. He was also ill in health and wished to go to Florence, but apparently he did not go, for the attempt of the Raffael party to arrest his work, most probably induced him to remain in Rome and to resume his operations as soon as possible. As a proof that as little time was lost as circumstances permitted, a part only of the scaffold was re-erected, enough to enable him without loss of time to begin to paint, if the weather proved favourable; for it must be considered that in winter he could only paint at intervals and in frosty weather not at all. This is not remembered by those who fancy that he pushed on without remission of his labour. Even in Rome there are many days in winter, when building and plastering cannot be proceeded with, and similar physical conditions must at intervals have arrested the work of Michelangelo in the Sixtine.

It is somewhat remarkable that in the letter last quoted he expresses an expectation that he will receive a payment, when not much more than a month had elapsed since an advance of a considerable sum had been made. The expressions regarding this might throw reasonable doubts upon the date assigned to

[1] Condivi, Ed. cit., p. 28.

this undated letter, but for the distinct allusion to the finishing and exhibition of the first portion of the frescos of the vault.

The artist disappears with the closing of the doors, and nothing is known of his work in the Chapel from the end of 1509 till the autumn of 1510, and even then but little light is thrown upon its progress. The persistency with which his biographers, even the most modern, insist that he executed the frescos of the vault in twenty months, notwithstanding the evident impossibility all circumstances taken into consideration is remarkable.

« The Pope constantly urged forwards, and would not suffer the least interruption. In this way alone can we explain the fact that Michelangelo was only twenty months accomplishing the entire work, ten for one, ten for the other half of the Chapel. »[1] This view is asserted although it is not upheld by the evidence of the frescos. The annotator of Le Monnier's edition of Vasari remarks on this subject. « It is difficult to understand how a practical artist like Vasari could write, that Buonarroti could complete this work alone and unaided in twenty months; inasmuch as this assertion is inconsistent with possibility, even if he had intended to specify only the last half of the work. » Further on in the appendix it is stated that on the first November 1509 the vault was exhibited, after twenty months labour, on the day of all Saints. « And it is previously stated that it was commenced on the tenth of May 1508. »[2] The inconsistency of the statement is obvious, when it is observed that from the tenth of May 1508 to the first of November 1509 is one year seven months and twenty one days only, and that twenty months before the first of November, Michelangelo was at Bologna.

The frescos of the vault of the Sixtine were not in reality completed till the year 1512, and although they did not occupy

[1] Life of Michelangelo. Herman Grimm, English translation V. I, p. 332.
[2] Le Monnier's edition of Vasari's Life of Michelangelo and notes.

four years actual work, Michelangelo was engaged for that time in the Chapel of Sixtus with intervals of deliberation and repose.

It has already been remarked that the painting must have been disarranged in winter by natural causes, and such interruptions are necessarily of some duration, for an artist cannot cease on a frosty day and resume work the next, if it happens to thaw. The interruption is permanent, spite of alternate days of south wind, for the lime freezes in the tanks, the practical conditions of the work are put in abeyance, and Michelangelo must thus have submitted to circumstances. That he did paint in winter is mentioned by Vasari in connection with the outburst of mould, but still it is evident that he must have been prevented from painting by frost, and thus the marvel is increased of the exhibition of the Chapel on the first of November 1509.

This interesting subject will be resumed at a future page. In the autumn of 1510 the curtain which has fallen between us and the operation of Michelangelo, is partially lifted. About midsummer he made application to the Pope for an advance of money and permission to visit his friends in Florence. The Pope inquired when he would have done with the Chapel, « when I shall be able » was the artist's hasty reply, whereon Julius repeating his words, struck him with his cane. Michelangelo at once made preparations for his departure or rather flight, but the Pope sent his page Accursio to pacify him, and at the same time fifty crowns for his expenses. The journey to Florence was accomplished, but apparently he did not stay long; still this is to be remembered as an other interruption to his work.

In September he wrote two letters to his father, which being almost duplicates, the last only is given:

« Dearest Father, I have been much distressed by your last informing me that Buonarroto is ill. Therefore immediately on

receipt of this go to the Director of the Hospital, and if you have need, make him pay you fifty or a hundred ducats, and arrange that all things necessary be provided, and that nothing be wanting for money's sake. I inform you that there are due me by the Pope five hundred ducats for work done, and as much more remains to be given me to make the scaffold, so as to proceed with the rest of my work, but he is gone hence and has not left any orders. I have written a letter to him. I do not know what will be the result. I should have gone to you on receiving your last, but if I left without leave, the Pope might be displeased, and I might not get what is due to me. But do not fail, if Buonarroto is ill, to inform me immediately, for if it is so, I shall take post horses and be with you in two days; men are worth more than money. Let me know, for I am anxious. »

The 7th day of September 1510.

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO
Sculptor, Rome.[1]

Whilst this interesting letter shows the strong affection which bound Michelangelo to his brother, it throws a ray of light upon details of considerable interest. The phrase « more remains to be given me to make the scaffold » shows that after the exhibition in November a portion only was re-erected, and Michelangelo now required that it should be added to or completed to enable him to proceed with his work. The large sum suggests that the completion was meant. It has been already pointed out that the whole of the scaffold was necessarily erected in 1508, because the vault required painting and roughplastering. It may be also considered certain that one of Michelangelo's first operations must

[1] Letter to his Father Buonarroti MSS. British Museum.

have been to lay off or plan out the whole of the architectural divisions of his design, before commencing to paint. Not only was this usual, but it might be done on the old system on the rough coat. That he did so is shown by the accuracy with which all the details of the decorative portion of the design are carried out, which would not have been the case, had they been drawn piecemeal.

The divisions thus laid off and the places of all the figures in the design being marked out and settled, it became practicable when the scaffold was taken down to erect it again in sections, and that this was at first done is apparent from the above letter. Before however the Chapel could be completed, it will be seen that the entire scaffold was required, which explains Michelangelo's, high estimate of the cost.

Before entering upon the practical reasons which made this expedient, Michelangelo's letters regarding the payments made to him render it necessary to consider these and their bearing upon his work, but this subject may be reserved for the commencement of the next chapter.

Chapter VIII

The record kept by Michelangelo in his letters, of the payments which he received on account of the painting of the Vault of the Sixtine Chapel, throws light both upon the conduct of Julius towards him and upon the progress made with his work. It is desirable for the sake of clearness to recall the payments made from the beginning of his operations In May 1508 he received an advance of five hundred ducats, to meet the necessary outlay in commencing and carrying out the work in the Chapel. Seven months afterwards he complained of being in want of money, but was so dissatisfied with his work, that he had not courage to apply to the Pope for an advance. In September of the following year he forwarded three hundred and fifty ducats to Florence, having probably received five hundred to account. In November 1509 the Chapel was by the Pope's order thrown open to the public, it being stated that half the work was done. This must be an error. Condivi says that the sum paid to Michelangelo for the whole

work was three thousand ducats; now that was the amount agreed upon for painting the twelve Apostles with the usual ornament. The sum agreed upon for the greatly extended design was to be more, and if Michelangelo was paid three thousand ducats only for the ceiling, when it was completed, then Julius treated him very ill and broke his pledge. In November, when the Chapel was thrown open to the public, Michelangelo had at most been paid one thousand ducats, assuming that he had received five hundred when he forwarded three hundred and fifty to Florence. It is not the least likely that his work was so far in advance of his payments, that he had executed one half of it under very depressing circumstances, and when also he had only been paid one third of the amount of his first contract, and certainly considerably less than one third of that, under which he was actually working.

In September 1510 Michelangelo informs his father that the Pope owes him five hundred ducats for work done, and as much more for the scaffold; and in a letter without date, but manifestly to be referred to this time, he states that he had been paid four hundred ducats to account. Nothing can be more unfair or more unsatisfactory than these payments. The Pope however at this time must have awakened to a sense of the injustice, with which Michelangelo was being treated; for on the twenty-sixth of October 1510 the artist writes to Buonarroto that the Pope's Treasurer had paid him five hundred ducats, being up to this date seventeen hundred and fifty ducats, with fifty crowns sent by the Pope through his Page, when he discovered that Michelangelo meant to leave Rome. Thus two years and nearly five months after He had begun to work in the Sixtine Chapel, he had not been paid one half of his larger contract, for it is quite reasonable to assume that it amounted to considerably more, than the first. Vasari specifies a much larger sum.

It is possible that the Pope, in his hard way, limited his payments by the amount of work done. Michelangelo admits that at first his progress was unsatisfactory, he would not ask for money, and Julius was not generous. But after the exhibition of the frescos he might, and he ought to have acted upon very different principles. On the contrary his conduct was as shabby as it was arbitrary.

In January 1511 Michelangelo paid a visit to the Pope then in the camp before Mirandola, and obtained another payment, the amount of which is not specified, but it says much for the justice of Michelangelo's demands which followed each other so rapidly, and something also for the temper of the Pope, that engaged as he then was conducting the operations of a siege, which he did with such soldier-like conduct as to expose himself freely to danger, he should have so promptly attended to the request made to him for further payment. The amount is not stated, but Michelangelo returned with the Pope's Chancellor to Rome and thence transmitted on the eleventh of January two hundred and fifty-eight ducats to his credit at Florence.

If this payment amounted also to five hundred ducats, he had now received altogether two thousand two hundred and fifty ducats and fifty crowns, sent by the Pope by the hands of his page Accursio.

In little more than a month afterwards, Michelangelo wrote to his brother: [1] « Buonarroto. Inclosed is a letter for Messer Agniolo. Deliver it immediately. I believe that it will be necessary for me to return to Bologna in a few days, for the Chancellor of the Pope, with whom I came from Bologna, promised me, when he left, that so soon as he was at Bologna, he would provide for me to enable me to work. It is a month since he went, and I have heard nothing. I shall wait the re-

[1] British Museum. Manuscript by Michelangelo.

mainder of the week, after which, if nothing comes, I believe that I shall go to Bologna and I shall pass by Florence. Nothing more. Inform Ludovico and tell him that I am well. »

The twenty third day of (February) 1511.

MICHELAGNIOLO
Sculptor, Rome.

This interesting subject will again be resumed in its place, when the work of Michelangelo was completed. In the mean time to return to the paintings of the Vault.

The evidence, which a close examination of the paintings of the Sixtine affords to the elucidation of their real history, has been interrupted to follow the correspondence, which throws so much light upon the proceedings of Michelangelo in the Chapel, and upon his life and thoughts. As for a time this correspondence diminishes or the letters written are lost, the consideration of the evidence deducible from the frescos may be resumed.

Vasari makes the following statement: « Michelangelo desired to retouch some parts « a secco » [1] as the old Masters had done in their historic pictures below, (the frescos on the walls below the vault). In these backgrounds, draperies and skies were painted with ultramarine, and ornaments touched in gold in some places, so as to give them more richness and greater show: now the Pope having heard that this was wanting, and at the same time praise of the process by those who had seen it, desired that it should be done. But as it would have been a long business for Michelangelo to rebuild the scaffold, it remained undone. The Pope, seeing Michelangelo, frequently said to him « Let the

[1] « *A secco* » as distinguished from « a fresco » means painting in size colour over the dry fresco painting, that is, when the fresco or fresh plaster of the first process had become quite dry and admitted of painting with size colour. In this case the artist is free to use delicate colours which, if applied on wet plaster, would instantly perish. He may also reinforce the shadows, which in fresco are apt to dry too light and so require this retouching.

Chapel be enriched with colour and gold for it is poor » Michelangelo jestingly replied: Holy Father, at that time men did not wear gold, and those who are here painted were not rich, but were devout men and despised riches. »

It would appear from this statement and that of Condivi also, that Michelangelo did not retouch the frescos when dry with size colour, nor gild any part of them, because the scaffold was taken down. On the vault being examined with a special view to the accuracy of these statements, it was found, that the frescos are extensively retouched with size colour, in the manner then common, evidently by the hand of Michelangelo. The colour readily melted on being touched with a wet finger and consisted of a finely ground black, mixed with a size probably made according to the usage of the time from parchment shavings. The shadows of the draperies have been boldy and solidly retouched with this size colour, as well as the shadows on the backgrounds. This is the case not only in the groups of the Prophets and Sybils, but also in those of the Ancestors of Christ in the lunettes and the ornamental portions are retouched in the same way. The hair of the heads and beards of many of the figures are finished in size colour, whilst the shadows are also thus strengthened, other parts are glazed with the same material, and even portions of the fresco painting are passed over with the size, without any admixture of colour, precisely as the force of water colour drawings is increased with washes of gum. There can be no doubt that nearly all this work is cotemporary, and in one part only was there evidence of a later and incapable hand. The size colour has cracked as the plaster has cracked, but apart from this appearance of age, the retouchings have all the characteristics of original work.

There are very few indications of retouchings on the carefully painted nude figures, or on the faces, hands and feet of draped

figures, and so far as it was possible to observe these, they are untouched with size colour. But further examination may discover glazing upon them and on other parts of the vault. It is remarkable that the face of Jeremiah seems colourless and painted in black and white only: that the face of Daniel is blotched with brown marks. These have undoubtedly been injured by rude hands, suggesting that glazing has been partially or entirely swept away.

Vasari's statement, that Michelangelo intended to apply ultramarine in painting the skies, is very likely true. There is no trace of it now, but done as Michelangelo would have done it, it is easy to imagine that it would have added to the beauty of the pictures in the panels, lustre to the imitative white marble, and harmony and brilliancy to the whole ceiling. It would have been in conformity with usage also.

Retouches in size-colour are easily recognized. Pure fresco has a metallic lustre, but the retouches are opaque. They are also necessarily painted differently from the fresco, have a sketchy appearance, with hard edges, or are hatched where an attempt is made to graduate them. These retouchings, as usual with all the Masters of the art of the time, constituted the finishing process or as Condivi expresses it, alluding to it in his history of these frescos, « l'ultima mano. » They were evidently done all at the same time, and therefore when the scaffold was in its place.

With regard to gilding; the frescos below the vault, referred to by Pope Julius, are much hatched and ornamented with gold in the barbaric manner of the art of medieval time and of the early renaissance. Against imitating this, the good taste of Michelangelo rebelled, the usage was also generally dying out and giving place to sounder principles of art. But he did not object to gilding on parts which were merely decorative; the subjects on the medallions freely sketched with a rich brown are

hatched with gold lines, the balusters of the thrones of the Prophets and Sybils are gilt, and it is probable that traces of gilding may be found on the yellow figures in the angles above the lunettes. Thus it is evident that Michelangelo left no part of his great work incomplete, but that he finished it in every respect, as he first designed it. [1]

The interesting question, how long did it really take to paint the frescos of the Sixtine Chapel, merits especial attention. The documentary evidence is now wholly opposed to the truth of the statements of Vasari and Condivi, that they were painted by Michelangelo « alone and unaided in twenty months, not even by some one to grind his colours. » This last assertion is so extravagant, that it is astonishing how practical artists could have deliberately written it. According to Condivi, twenty-five ducats were expended on the colours; as has been already observed there must have been an enormous quantity used, and it is absurd to suppose that an artist who invariably availed himself of assistants, should have departed from his usual habits upon this occasion. He could find many colour grinders in Rome much more competent than he could be, to grind his colours. The story may have sprung from the fact that the Master fresco painter prepares the palettes daily for himself and assistants, so as to insure the proper mixture and selection of tints, and is often thus occupied whilst his pupils are painting.

So far as the computation of the time occupied in executing a fresco painting is concerned, it is easy to fix its duration, as every day's work is marked by the joints in the plaster, which remain visible after it is finished. In the morning the plasterer presents himself to the artist and is instructed where to lay the fine coat of plaster required. When it is laid, the artist marks

[1] Unless the skies never were painted with ultramarine, in which case this was an omission.

out the outline, and his colours being ready, he begins to paint, when he has finished his day's work, he takes a knife and cuts away all the plaster, which he has not made use of. Next morning the plasterer again appears and again receives his instructions and joins the fresh plaster to that laid and painted, the day before, at one or more of the cuts made by the artist's knife. Between the two expanses of plaster a fine line or joint remains permanently visible. The closeness or coarseness of these joints varied greatly in the frescos of the old Masters, according to the degree of skill possessed by the plasterers, some being hardly discernible, whilst others are very distinct.

In the frescos of the Sixtine the joints have been made with special care, Michelangelo disliked any disturbance of the surface; always finishing his own work carefully, he would not tolerate neglect in his assistants. Where the figures are retouched with size colour, the joints are for the most part hidden by it. In the nude figures the lines are however more visible, and the number of days occupied in painting them, may be counted.

The fictitious marvels related by Vasari and Condivi fall short of those disclosed by the frescos of the Sixtine, when closely observed. Michelangelo could paint a nude figure considerably above life size in two working days, the workmanship being perfect in every part. The colossal nude figures of young men on the cornice of the vault at most occupied four days each. There are appearances about some of them, that less time was spent over them, yet they are admirably finished. The reclining figure of Adam, as seen from a distance of eight feet from the scaffold has apparently been painted in three days. The stature is about ten feet. In the excellent photograph by M. Braun there are appearances of a joint across the loins.[1] If there is

[1] The marks of the stylus are observable also in M. Braun's photograph and are indicated in the illustration by dotted lines as are the joints in the plaster by larger marks.

such a joint in the fresco, then Michelangelo was occupied for four days painting this magnificent figure, which throughout is finished in every part in the most careful manner. He devoted an entire day to the head and apparently throughout the whole of the vault, it was his wont at this period of his life to devote more time to the heads than to other parts of the figure, but at a later period of his career it was not so.

This wonderful power of rapid execution combined with the highest finish was not limited to Michelangelo. His princely compeer Raffael painted with similar celerity and equal beauty of handling. Other eminent artists might be mentioned, who also painted with quickness and facility; but this is often found associated with slight and sketchy work, whereas Michelangelo's and Raffael's execution, however rapid, was never so.

There is no possibility of doubt that Michelangelo provided full size working drawings. It has been already remarked that the great masters spent more time upon the execution of the Cartoon, than the fresco, the two most famous instances being the Cartoons of Lionardo da Vinci and Michelangelo for the paintings in the Palace of the Signory. But it is also certain that they did not invariably prepare these laboriously finished Cartoons. Some of these, provided by Michelangelo for the Pauline Chapel, exist at Naples and are said to be slightly drawn. It is probable that the Cartoons for the Sixtine frescos, or at any rate most of them, were of the same nature. It may be reasonably assumed that no Cartoons were prepared for the standing figures under the feet of the Prophets and Sybils, none for the groups of children on the piers, nor for the yellow figures in the angles above, nor for the subjects in the medallions. These being deducted, there remain important figures and groups, for which it is calculated that at least fifty nine Cartoons must have been prepared, besides the working drawings for the architectural decoration.

Michelangelo's method of preparing his drawings has been already described, the small sketch, the study from nature and the enlarged drawing or working cartoon. It has also been shown that he sketched with extraordinary rapidity, and this must be taken into consideration in calculating the time which he expended during his preparations for painting in fresco. At least two hundred working days must be allowed for the execution of the sketches and Cartoons, this calculation being based on the known rapidity of his execution. Twenty months contain six hundred and eight days, from which deducting two hundred for the Cartoons, four hundred and eight remain, in which to paint three hundred and forty-three figures.[1] It will at once be seen that stupendous as were the powers of Michelangelo and marvellous, as was in reality, the rate at which he could paint, it was not possible to execute the entire work in twenty months, not even with the assistance which he employed, which, judging by the frescos, was evidently small in amount. That he should do so entirely unaided was an extravagant assertion not even if he painted without rest and coutinuously during the whole of that period. It is evident that to do this was impossible, the breaks which took place owing to absences and other circumstances, such as cold or frosty weather, have been enumerated to show that practically he could not paint continuously, and it must be felt that mind and body would have both broken down under such continued exertion.[2] The evidence of the frescos clearly shows, that Michelangelo made extraordinary efforts at intervals, painted probably for weeks together with untiring

[1] In this computation of the number of figures it is not to be understood that entire figures are meant in every case. The heads were counted, and of some figures the heads only are seen.

[2] The fact that Michelangelo could paint nude figures larger than nature in from two to four days if applied as a basis of calculation to all the groups and figures might bring the actual painting within twenty months of working days, if Michelangelo worked during that time without intermission and did nothing else. This was not the case.

energy and then rested. This is consistent with what is known of him. Periods of hard work were followed by intervals of repose devoted to reading and the study of his favourite authors. It may have been at such times that Julius, whose restless energetic spirit kept him unceasingly occupied, and who possibly did not understand the poet painter's need of rest after great creative efforts, harassed him with urgent remonstrances and impatient expressions of dissatisfaction, met by the great artist with equally impatient replies. Executed then not in twenty months, but in four years of alternate efforts wonderful in their energy, and of rests necessitated hy circumstances and by the demands of body and mind, the frescos of the Sixtine remain unequalled examples of creative power, unsurpassed technical skill and the triumph of genius over trials and difficulties, as painful, as they were singular and varied, afid rendered doubly so by the melancholy temperament and nervous constitution of the mighty artist. Besides the causes for sadness proceeding from his home, it may be justly surmised that Michelangelo felt bitterly the conduct of Pope Julius towards his beloved Florence. His countrymen were excommunicated by the irate Pontiff; an exercise of spiritual power which they disregarded. He then insisted that they should separate themselves from their alliance with France, and should aid him in his projects with men and money. The troubles of the wealthy and free Republic were increased by a union between the Emperor and the Pope, and of course a demand on his part for money, which was at once refused. The envoy of the Emperor thereupon entered into negotiations with Cardinal Giovanni de'Medici and with Giuliano for the restoration of the Medicis to power, on condition that they would pay a sum, which it was hopeless to demand from the independent government. The Pope favoured the Medicis, and the spanish Viceroy Don Raimondo di Cardona readily

joined the project for overthrowing the government of Florence, restoring the Medicis, gratifying the Pope and checking France.

The Florentines unable by negotiation to avert the evils which threatened them, prepared for their defence. They hoped that the enemy which laid siege to Prato would be delayed by a vigorous resistance, but it fell on the first assault and was cruelly pillaged. The partizans of the Medicis took advantage of the dismay caused by the fall of Prato, and in a tumultuous assemblage of partizans revolutionized the government, imposed their will on the Signory and compelled Piero Soderini to vacate the Presidency and to leave the city.

The Viceroy entered Florence. The rights of the Medicis were restored, which meant, as all men knew, that having been driven out as Lords of the city, as Lords they now returned.

Such was Michelangelo's patriotism and love of liberty that these deplorable events grieved and depressed him. As usual his mind turned towards his father and brothers, for he knew that they would be exposed to danger. He therefore wrote to his brother Buonarroto, advising that the family should leave the city as soon as possible, and that if they could not carry their property with them, at any rate to save their lives. At the same time he directed them to the Governor of the hospital, where his savings were deposited, that they might have as much money as they required, for in such a case of peril the expense was not to be considered. He concluded by saying « with regard to the land encumber yourselves with nothing, neither by deed nor word, act as you would in the case of plague, and be the first to fly. »

On the fifteenth of September, hearing that the Medicis were in Florence and that tranquillity had been restored, and that all danger of violence and rapine was over, his confidence returned and he wrote to his brother:

« I understand from your last letter that the city was in great danger, and I was greatly grieved; now I hear it is said that the Medicis are again in Florence and that order has been restored: from which I conclude that all danger from the Spaniards has passed, and there is no reason now why you should depart, therefore remain in peace. Make no friendships nor intimacies with any one, but the Allmighty alone. Speak neither good nor evil of any one, because the end of these things cannot yet be known. Attend only to your own affairs. I must tell you that I have no money, I am, I may say, shoelèss and naked. I cannot receive the balance of my pay till I have finished this work, and I suffer much discomfort and fatigue; therefore, when you also have trouble to endure, do not make useless complaints, but try to help yourself. Do not take my money from me. I save in case of accidents or dangerous times. If however you are in great need, write to me at once. I shall be with yóu soon. I shall not fail by some means to be with you on All Saint's day, if it please God.» [1]

It is apparent from this letter that however nearly the end of his labours was at hand, the frescos were not yet finished. It is probable however that it was about this time that the ample retouchings, which have been described, were in process of execution.

His regard for his family suggested the letter of the 15th September. He did not however always observe the same lessons of prudence himself, but was prompted by his sense of justice and his abhorrence of misdoing to express his sentiments, when intelligence reached him of the pillage of Prato. The silence which he maintained in relation to political affairs was fully justified by the perilous and unscrupulous nature of the times

[1] Buonarroti Archives. From Rome 15 September 1512.

in which he lived. His experience of the men who played a part in public affairs, taught him not to trust one party more than another, but when he heard of wrong doing such as that at Prato by the Medicis and their adherents, he wrote in reply to a letter of his father:

« With regard to the Medicis, I never have spoken against them, except in that manner in which they are universally spoken of by all men with regard to the affairs of Prato, of which if the stones could speak, they would cry out. But besides this, many other things have been said here, which hearing, I said, if it is true that they act thus, they do ill: not that I have believed it of them, and God grant that they be not so. About a month ago a certain person, who showed himself very friendly towards me, had said much evil regarding them, so that I reproved him and said that he did not do well to speak thus, and that he was not again to speak to me so. »[1] Michelangelo could not forget what he owed to the Medicis nor his own friendship for them; he condemned the misdeeds at Prato, but would not listen to evil reports without a protest.

After the restoration of the Medicis, augmented taxation bore heavily upon the Florentines, and the Buonarroti in their narrow and dependent circumstances suffered new privations. As usual a new appeal was made to the good angel of the family, nor did he fail to show his usual kindness nor to exercise his usual self denial. He came to their aid and for their sakes gave of those savings, which no want upon his own part seems to have induced him to expend upon himself.

Michelangelo did not limit himself to the offer of money to assist in paying the new taxes, but he wrote to Giuliano de'Medici in favour of his family. The following letter written at this

[1] British Museum. Buonarroti MSS. 1512.

time, transcribed in full, is evidence of that conflict between his judgment and his affections, which marked so much of his correspondence with his family. At times his ardent temperament led him to break into irascible expressions, quite justified by the occasion, the effects of which he as readily tried to mitigate and soften. At one time haughty, at another humble, amidst conflicting emotions the profoundly religious tone supplied comfort to a mind overburthened with its trials.

« Dearest Father, by your last letter I learn how affairs are going with you, which before I knew in part. We must have patience and recommend ourselves to God and try to acknowledge our errors, for which and for no other reason this adversity has befallen us, and especially for pride and ingratitude. I never have known a people so proud and ungrateful as the Florentines, so that justice overtakes them with good reason.

With regard to the sixty ducats which you tell me you have to pay, it appears to me a dishonest charge, and I have been greatly vexed, still we must have patience and submit to the will of God. I shall write two sentences to Giuliano de' Medici, which will be inclosed in this; read them, and, if you like, take them to him and you will see whether they will benefit you. If they do not, think how you can sell our possessions, and we shall go elsewhere to live. If you observe that you are worse treated than others, refuse to pay, rather let them seize what you have, and let me know, but if you are treated on the same way as our equals, be patient and hope in God. You tell me that you have provided thirty ducats, take thirty of mine, and send me the balance here: take it to Bonifazio Fati, that he may transmit it here through Giovanni Balducci, and make Bonifazio give you a receipt for the money, and inclose it in your letter, when you write to me. Live on, and if you are not to

share in the honours of this world, like other citizens, it is enough to have bread, and to live in the faith of Christ, even as I do here, for I live humbly, nor do I care for the life, nor the honours of this world. I endure great weariness and hopelessness, so it has been with me for fifteen years, never an hour's comfort, you have never known nor believed how I have striven to aid you. God forgive us all. I am prepared, so far as I can, to do always the same, whilst I live. »[1]

Michelangelo's intervention in favour of his family was successful, as he was informed by his father, and they were absolved from paying the tax.

The touching pathos of the few last lines of the above interesting letter can only be allusive to the treatment which he experienced during the progress of his great work; he felt that his labours were not requited, as they ought to have been, and therefore that they were vain; he was urged beyond bearing to work, and payment was withheld to compel him to hasten it. Julius thought that at his age there was no time to spare, and he was impatient with the great artist, whose genius he appreciated, but whom he appears to have regarded as a machine to be moved by his will, nor does he seem to have considered the nature he had to deal with, still less the effects upon it of his own acts. On the other hand Michelangelo may not have understood the ardent desire of the Pontiff to sweep the « barbarians » from the sacred soil of Italy, still less his policy in attaining his end, especially when it sacrificed the welfare of Florence. It was when this policy had reversed her liberties, that Michelangelo concluded his work in the Sixtine, which he relates in these brief and simple terms.

[1] British Museum Buonarroti MSS. 1512.

« I have finished the chapel, which I painted: The Pope is very well satisfied; but other things do not happen as I wished, lay blame on the times which are unfavourable to art. » [1]

So the termination of the greatest work of painting of modern times is chronicled. The great artist left the frescos on which he had been occupied for years, unnoticed, except by a few words of praise from the Sovereign Pontiff, whom he had served so well. There is no account of a repetition of the exhibition of the paintings, nor of crowds to see them or to do honour to Michelangelo; the silence on their completion, even of detraction, contrasts with the excitement manifested when only a part of them was first seen.

The last words of the brief notice of the end of so great a work show that it was not adequately rewarded. A document preserved in the British Museum amongst the Buonarroti manuscripts, written by the hand of Michelangelo, leaves no doubt upon the subject. It repeats some statements already quoted: « Afterwards returning to Rome he (the Pope) would not that I should proceed with the monument, but would that I should paint the vault of Sixtus, for which we came to an agreement for three thousand ducats for the whole expense with few figures only.

But after I had made some designs, it appeared to me that it would turn out a poor thing, so he made another contract with me including the histories below, and that I should do on the vault what I pleased, which amounted to about as much more, and so we were agreed: afterwards the vault being finished, when came the time for settlement, the affair did not make progress, so that I hold that there remain to pay me several hundred ducats. » [2]

[1] British Museum Buonarroti MSS. without date but evidently 1512.
[2] British Museum Buonarroti MSS. without date.

From this statement it appears that Michelangelo was to be paid six thousand ducats for painting the vault and the religious subjects on the wall below. These not having been executed, the value assigned for them must be deducted from the cost of the painting of the vault. There are no means of doing this now, but Michelangelo held that several hundred ducats were due to him upon his contract. If to this be added the sum also due to him on the bronze statue executed at Bologna, at least a thousand ducats, Julius died his debtor to a considerable amount. His treatment of Michelangelo in money matters is altogether mysterious; some evil agency, and the artist had many enemies, must have arrested the stream of his bounty. The papal treasury was not emptied by wasteful extravagance as by his successor, for notwithstanding the warlike operations of his reign, he left it well provided. At his bidding Michelangelo sacrificed, country, friends and honourable employment in Florence, to be ill requited for his sacrifice, and indifferently protected from the machinations of his enemies, whose objects the Pope must have seen through and might have discouraged by demonstrating his displeasure. He died in 1513 in debt to Michelangelo of sums which never were paid afterwards, and bequeathed to the great sculptor the execution of his monument, which circumstances rendered the bane of his existence.

Few now think of or care for the acts of the stormy pontificate of Julius, but his name is honourably associated with his culture of the fine arts and especially with the creations of Michelangelo and Raffael, and the personal friendship with which he regarded these great men is remembered with sympathy and interest, spite of his errors of conduct springing from an arbitary and impatient disposition. Injustice has been done to him by posterity, by the baptism of the first quarter of the sixteenth century with the name of his successor instead of with his. The age of Julius

was the golden age of art, rather than that of Leo, who was as much his inferior in imagination and enterprize as he was in originality and loftiness of aim in his employment of men of genius.

It might have been supposed, that every means would have been taken to insure the safety and preservation of the noble works of art in the Sixtine. The contrary has been the case; they have been neglected and wilfully maltreated, and this not by enemies, whether foreign troops or revolutionary mobs. Here as elsewhere throughout Italy the Sacristan, and the spirit of the Sacristan in his superiors, have been the worst enemies of works of art, for everywhere in the peninsula the most precious treasures of painting which the genius of Italians have created, have been left to the clumsy operations of the most ignorant of church officials, and church decorators, who have nailed their gaudy properties, without scruple against the fresco painted walls. In the Sixtine many square feet of the fresco of the last judgment are scratched and defaced by ladders placed against it to erect an altar piece of tapestry, the frame work of which is held up by iron stanchells driven into the painting of Michelangelo. The love of altar illumination, so wide spread in Italy, has done more to destroy pictures of every description than any other cause whatever. The frescos of the Sixtine, like those in many other chapels, are so darkened by the effects of the smoke of tapers, that seen from the floor the real colours are imperceptible. This veil of soot has been increased, it is said, by the burning of documents connected with each conclave, so that every election of a Pontiff, since the death of Julius, if the custom is so old, has contributed to the obscuration of these great works. Cobwebs hang from every part of the ceiling — as they hang in neglected crypts, charged with dust, and the undisturbed insects pursue their industry ceaselessly. Numerous cracks of the

plaster run lengthways in meandering lines on the ceiling, like the rivers on a map with their many affluents. These cracks are of a dark brown colour and present a singular and unsightly appearance. [1] They indicate a want of stability in the brick arch, which is evidently indifferently constructed, its surface is uneven, which is not observable from below, but is readily perceived from a distance of a few feet.

The surface of the finished plaster mixed with marble dust, upon which the frescos were painted, being composed of Roman lime and laid too thickly upon an irregular surface of rough plastering below, is cracked all over. [2] It may be said that there are not two square inches not so cracked. This is a defect of Roman lime which has this tendency, but, as far as it could be examined, the plaster or « intonaco » is solid and hard and would bear cleaning.

Unhappily some portions of the plaster have fallen down. An entire figure nearly, of one of the young men sitting on the cornice, has thus disappeared, and has been rudely replastered. Other parts broken out have been clumsily mended and coloured by working plasterers, but grievous as these facts are worse remains to be told. The ceiling has at one time been washed by labouring men with water in which a caustic has been mixed. Thus great brushes or sponges have been swept over the skies and backgrounds and have not only removed the dirt in a coarse unequal way, but have eaten into the colours and destroyed them

[1] The intelligent Photographer of the frescos states that many of these cracks are only apparent and that they are painted on the ceiling. The explanation of this extraordinary statement would be that Michelangelo dreading the insecurity of the vault painted fictitious cracks to induce the building of buttresses to sustain it. I was not near enough to ascertain the real nature of these marks, but was struck with their brown colour and thought that they were cracks filled with a brown mastic, by no means a satisfactory solution; many of them were evidently fissures filled with dirt.

[2] It was easy to insert the point of a pen knife through some of these cracks when it was found that the smooth coat of plaster varied in thickness from a quarter of an inch to half an inch. This would certainly lead to cracking. But Roman lime is known to crack and Tuscan lime is now frequently sent to Rome on account of its better quality.

in a variety of places. The face, shoulder and arm of the Prophet Daniel, various parts of the bodies and limbs of the young men sitting over the cornice and other portions of the frescos have been nearly obliterated by this savage proceeding. The injury done is irremediable, for the surface of Michelangelo's work has been swept away. As the forms remain, the parts may be glazed and toned, should any attempt be made to clean the surface.

It is to be hoped that the conscience of Italy will be awakened, and that sorrow and shame will take the place of the indifference with which the destruction of works of art, going on for centuries has been regarded. In some places, notably Ferrara, copies have been substituted as altar pieces and original pictures in churches have been rescued from the treatment to which they have been exposed by ignorance, and from damp and the smoke of tapers. Much however yet remains to be done, and if the frescos of the Sixtine vault are undoubtedly the greatest work of painting in existence, they are equally the greatest existing examples of barbarous maltreatment and neglect.

Chapter IX

On the death of Julius the Second, the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was elected supreme Pontiff the eleventh day of March 1513, and was consecrated the 11th of the following April as Leo the Tenth. He had been promoted to the dignity of Cardinal when only thirteen years old, and it was also his fortune to be made Pope, at the early age of thirty-one.

There was much rejoicing on the part of those who anticipated a renewal of the splendour and luxury for which the Medici were famous. Men of letters and Artists, remembering the munificence of his father and his encouragement of literature and art, hoped that the son, educated in that father's house, under the tutelage of Agnolo Poliziano, who had been surrounded by every thing which could make similar tastes attractive and who had associated on terms of friendship with Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola and other eminent men, including his schoolfellow Michelangelo, would equal his celebrated father in his protection of genius.

His brother Piero, brought up with equal advantages, had proved unworthy; but Leo was of a different disposition and capacity and loved the society of men of genius. His first proceedings as Pope were eminently conciliatory. He restored peace to the church — so far as that could be done — by pardoning the Cardinals who had provoked his predecessor, he recalled Pietro Soderini from exile, released Machiavelli from his bonds, and freed opponents of the Medici who lay in prison.

As was expected of him he confirmed Raffael and other eminent artists in their employments in the Vatican and St Peter's, and graciously extended to them his friendly notice; at the same time, he did that which was most satisfactory to Michelangelo, leaving him in peace in his studio with the monument of Julius.

The election of a Florentine as Pope induced his compatriots to flock to Rome in search of preferment or emolument. Two citizens only went there actuated by disinterested motives, and these were Pietro Soderini, and Antonio Carafulla the capmaker a notorius buffoon. The Pope to whom the presence of his countrymen was made known in many ways, remarked, « that amongst so many Florentine citizens he had found one only who was supremely wise and that was Piero Soderini, and one supremely foolish Antonio the cap maker, neither of whom asked aught for himself or for the city. »

Florence at the time under Medicean rule manifested its satisfaction with the elevation of Leo, by sending an embassy to congratulate him, composed of twelve nobles and citizens adherents of the Medici, which was as splendidly equipped as it was numerous. The choice of Leo as Pope was received not only throughout Italy but the rest of Europe with approbation and his Pontificate commenced under happy auspices.

Although Michelangelo was left undisturbed for some time to go on with the sepulchre of Julius, it by no means follows that there was any sympathy on the part of Leo for the commemoration of his predecessor by the greatest sculptor of the age, but the time however, had not yet come for any demonstration hostile to the wishes of the heirs of the Rovere, consequently Michelangelo was not interfered with. He had entered into a new contract with the Executors of Julius, Lorenzo Pucci afterwards Cardinal Santiquattro and the Cardinal Grossi Della Rovere, [1] appointed by the late Pope to watch over the execution of his monument.

It has been said that before he died Julius expressed a wish that his sepulchre should be carried out on a more modest plan than the first. An expression made use of at a later date by Michelangelo is not consistent with this statement for he says: « Aginensis (The Cardinal Grossi Della Rovere) wished me to go on with the tomb but on a greater scale. » [2]

A draft of the new contract, dated the sixth of May 1513 exists in the Buonarroti Archives, which shows that reductions were made in the proportions of the monument. Although written by Michelangelo it is not entirely to be depended upon. The proportions given are inconsistent with the work actually executed. The document is probably a draft subsequently altered in the plenary contract.

[1] This Cardinal was Lorenzo Pucci a Florentine. He was promoted to that dignity by Leo X. He must be distinguished from Antonio Pucci made Cardinal by Clement VII and from Roberto Pucci elevated to the same high rank by Paul III. All three were known by the title of Cardinal di Santiquattro.

Aginensis was appointed Cardinal by Julius II in 1505. His name was Leonardi Grossi Della Rovere, his title Cardinal St Pietro ad Vincula. He was a son of a sister of Sixtus IV.

[2] The letter of Michelangelo from which this extract is made, was discovered in the Magliabecchian Library Florence by Signor Sebastiano Ciampi and was published by him with valuable notes in 1834. He is of opinion that the above statement refers not to the first monument designed during the life time of Julius but to the two posterior designs which were to be on a less costly scale.

The monument was no longer to be isolated, but attached by one end to the wall of the Church. The architectural basement was retained in respect of its general features, of pedestals, niches and cornice, but pilasters were to be substituted for the terminal figures. The statues of this first order were to be Victories, conquered Provinces and Captives as in the first design, and were to be twenty-four in number and about six feet nine inches high. The richly decorated basement is described as fifteen feet on the face, twenty-six feet three inches on the flanks and only ten feet six inches high. Manifestly erroneous statements. On the platform of this first story the sarcophagus of the Pope was to be placed with his statue upon it, and two figures were to stand on each side of the head, and two on each side of the feet. Besides these, there were included six sitting statues nearly twice the size of life. Against the wall at the rear end of the platform a chapel was to be built about twenty-six feet high, adorned with five statues of still more colossal proportions than those on the platform.

In addition to this list of forty statues, three reliefs were to be executed either in marble or bronze, as the Executors might, on consideration, select.

Signor Sebastiano Ciampi, who published Michelangelo's letter explaining the history of the tomb of Julius, supposes that the drawing in the Florentine collection, already alluded to, represents this design. But if a scale be applied, it will be found not to agree in a single detail with the description, nor with the measurements given by Michelangelo. It cannot therefore be the second design. It has been more commonly considered to represent the first as described by Condivi, but it differs in essential particulars, especially in the number of statues. Neither does it approach with any accuracy to the design for the third contract, and consequently it can only be supposed to be one of

a variety of sketches made by the artist in the course of his study of the subject, to be subsequently reduced to scale.

A peculiarity of the second design is the increase in size of the statues, as they recede from the eye. Those opposite to it being little more than life size, those only ten feet from the ground (the ten appears to be an accidental error and should rather be fourteen the actual height) are suddenly increased to nearly twice the size of life, evidently more that the perspective diminution involved in that distance could require. The figures on the Chapel were to be larger still. The statue of Moses is the only one of those described in this second design, which was executed, and its proportions agree with the specification, but the figures of the Captives sculptured under this contract — which are now preserved in the Louvre — are at least a foot higher than the description given of them. The facade of the first stage of the monument, as it is now seen, was executed under this second covenant, as described by himself. « I took the marbles to the Macello de' Corvi, and had wrought that side which is now set up at San Pietro in Vincola, and I made the figures which I have in my house. »[1] This is very distinct, he had the architectural part sculptured by assistants and made the statues himself. Whilst engaged in this manner in his new work shop in the Macello de' Corvi, he was visited by the celebrated painter Luca Signorelli of Cortona and in the following narrative of their interview, the statues are incidentally mentioned.

To the Captain of Cortona,[2]

« Captain, I being in Rome, in the first year of Pope Leo, Luca of Cortona, the painter, came there; and happening to meet him one day, near Monte Giordano, he said to me that he had come

[1] Letter by Michelangelo published by Sebastian Ciampi p. 3.
[2] Archives Buonarroti.

to speak to the Pope, to obtain I dont remember what; and that he had been near having his head cut off, for the love that he bore to the house of Medici; and that this appeared to him, so to say, not to be recognized; and he told me other things of the same kind, which I do not remember. And for these reasons he asked me for a loan of forty julians, and told me where to send them, that is to say to the shop of a shoemaker, where I believe he lodged. Not having the money in my pocket, I had offered to send it to him and so I did. So soon as I returned home I sent him the forty julians by one of my assistants either called or who is known as Silvio,[1] who is now, I believe, in Rome. After this perhaps not having been successful, in his attempt, the said Master Luca, some days having passed, came to my house in the Macello dei Corvi, in the house which I still have, and found me at work upon a statue of marble, erect with hands behind it, and four braccia [2] in height, and lamented his case and asked me for other forty julians, saying that he meant to go away. I went up to my room and brought him forty julians, there being present a Bolognese man servant then with me, and I believe that there was also the same assistant who carried him the others; he took the said money and departed with God. I have never seen him again. I being at that time unwell before Master Luca left my house, I lamented that I was unable to work; and he said to me, « doubt not, for the angels from heaven will come to assist thee. » I write this to you, for if these things are repeated to Master Luca, he would remember them, and would not say that he has repaid me, as your Signory wrote to Buonarroto that he says he did, and more than this, that you also know that he repaid me. This is to say that I

[1] Silvio Falcone della Sabina Painter. The circumstance of a painter being thus alluded to by Michelangelo as a « Garzone » or assistant, suggests that this Silvio may have been so employed in the Capella Sistina.

[2] Seven feet seven inches.

ONE OF THE YOUNG MEN
ON THE CORNICE
SIXTINE CHAPEL

PLATE 10.

STATUE OF A PRISONER
FOR THE MONUMENT OF JULIUS II

PLATE 7.

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am a great villain; as so it would be, were I to claim that which has been already repaid, and I swear it. When your Signory will do me justice, you can do it; but if not I must complain (?) to the Captain. »

This is an unpleaseant story of the conduct of Luca Signorelli and exhibits him both as a knave and a hypocrite.

The letter is not a favourable instance of the conduct of Michelangelo. He had been overreached, it is true, but for the sake of the great and kindred ability of the artist of Cortona, it would have been nobler, had he overlooked the debt and the circumstances under which it was made.

Michelangelo entered upon the fulfilment of his new engagement with the representatives of the late Pope Julius with all the energy of his character. On the sixth of May, the date of the second contract he received an advance of two hundred ducats and in the course of this year 1513 he was further paid one thousand two hundred ducats, which shows that his work was proceeding to the entire satisfaction of the Executors. That this zeal on the artist's part was not temporary is shown by the fact that in the two following years the payments which he received amounted to six thousand one hundred ducats, paid through Bernardo Bini.

Precisely one year after the election of Leo and on the same day, the eleventh of March, Bramante d'Urbino, the celebrated architect died. It is for other pages to do justice to his genius and his works, in these he appears chiefly as the enemy of Michelangelo, an enmity of which there can be no question, although the motives seem quite inadequate to account for it. It does not appear that except by his intimacy with Julius, Michelangelo could have excited this feeling on the part of Bramante, towards whom he showed no personal dislike. The enmity manifested was bitter and malignant and was supported by mis-

representation as shown by the letter of Roselli, whilst it dates from a period anterior to Raffael's arrival in Rome, and therefore in the first place had nothing to do with his devotion to the cause of his great compatriot. If his jealousy of the one great artist and regard for the other did not place them in opposition, it prevented them from meeting on friendly terms. It was by an act of Bramante that this indifference was changed into a feeling of antagonism. The proposal that Raffael should replace Michelangelo in the Sixtine, produced its natural fruits. Although Michelangelo did not at first complain of Raffael, it is certain that at a later period he believed that his rival had taken a share in the proposal, and he felt it bitterly.

If however Michelangelo when excited, sometimes expressed his indignation in unmeasured terms, he was too noble in disposition to permit the remembrance of injury to influence his conduct. When in his turn he became Architect of St Peter's he did justice to Bramante's design for it, and after Raffael's early death, he refused all offers made to paint the last of the Stanze, the hall of Constantine, and would listen to no suggestion to prevent the Pupils of Raffael from carrying out the wishes of their master.

In 1514, whilst busy with the monument of Julius, Michelangelo accepted a contract to execute a statue of the risen Saviour, of life size, at the request of Bernardo Cencio, Canon of St Peter's, Maestro Mario Scappini and Metello Varj. He undertook to complete this statue in three years, with a reserve of one year more in case of accidents. The price was fixed at two hundred ducats in gold full weight, on which one hundred and fifty were advanced in June. Michelangelo commenced this statue, and had carried it some length, when veins appeared in the marble and he abandoned it, sacrificing the labour and expense. He recommenced and finished it afterwards at Florence, as will be related in its place.

Michelangelo's letters written during the comparatively peaceful and busy period from 1513 to 1516 either were not numerous, or if so, must have been lost. The following written in 1515 shows the spirit in which the many benefits which he showered on his family, were received. «Buonarroto.[1] Michele, the Carver has come to live with me and has asked me for money to transmit to his friends there» (in Florence) «which I forward to thee. Go immediately to Bonifazio and he will give thee four broad ducats, pay them to Meo Chimenti, who works in the office of works,[2] and hand him the letter inclosed and make him sign a receipt with his own hand, that he has received them from me for Michele, and send it to me.

The said Michele has explained to me how thou didst show him that thou hadst expended sixty ducats at Settignano. I remember that thou didst say so to me here at table, that thou hadst spent many ducats. I pretended not to hear thee, and I did not marvel, for I know thee. I believe that thou hast written them down and that thou keepest an account so as to demand them some day. I wish to know from thy ingratitude with what money has thou gained these; and I would besides know if thou also keepest account of those two hundred and twenty-eight ducats which you[3] took of mine from Sta Maria Nuova, and of many other hundreds which I have spent on you and of the discomforts and hardships, which I have suffered to aid you.

I would know if thou keepest account of these. If thou hadst brains enough to understand the truth, thou wouldst not say:

[1] On the back is written on the hand of Buonarroto 1513 from Rome the eleventh day of August: of the 3rd day of July.

«Which means written 3rd July and received 11th August In the hand of Ludovico is the following significant note. As to the 100 ducats which he gave to his brothers and me, I never had them.»

[2] Of the Cathedral Florence.

[3] The change of pronoun is as in the original letter.

I have spent so much of mine: nor wouldst thou have come here to sollicit me about your affairs, seeing how I have acted towards you in the past; on the contrary thou wouldst have said: Michelangelo knows what he has written, and if he does not do so now, he must have some difficulty of which we know nothing we must be patient, for it is not well to spur the horse which runs as well as he can, and even more than he can, but you have not understood and do not know me. God pardon you, for He has given me grace to bear that which I bear, or have borne, so that you might be assisted; but you will know when you no longer have me.

I inform thee that I do not believe that I can be in Florence this September, for I am hurried so that I have not even time to eat. God grant that I may be able to support it: however, I will as I can, make the procuration to Ludovico, as I wrote: which I had forgotten, and I will put into your hands a thousand broad ducats, as I promised you, so that with the money which you have, you may begin to support yourself. I do not wish any part of your gains, but I would wish to feel certain that at the end of ten years, you, (should I be alive), should consign to me in goods or money these thousand ducats when I desire to have them; not that I believe that this will come to pass; but should I have need, that I may have them again, as I have said.

And this will be a check upon you, that you may not waste them: therefore think and take counsel and write to me what you will do. The four hundred ducats which you have had from me, I wish to be divided into four parts, and that you take one hundred each: and so I give them to you. One hundred to Ludovico, one hundred to you, one hundred to Giovan Simone and one hundred to Gismondo; with this condition, that you cannot expend them otherwise than on the business. No

more, show this letter to Ludovico, and determine what you will do and write to me, as I have said. The thirtieth of July 1513. Be careful to give the money which I send you to Michele.»

MICHELAGNIOLO
Sculptor, Rome.

Apart from Michelangelo's complaint of the shabby and ungrateful conduct of his brother and the evidence of his kind forgiving and generous temper, this letter shows that at this time he was so hard at work on the monument, that he had hardly time to eat.

He also alludes to an assistant whom he employed and who lived with him, Michele di Piero di Pippo, called Battaglino, [1] a carver of Settignano; one, no doubt, of several then busy with the different details of Michelangelo's great work, whilst he set them an example of untiring industry.

There occurs a blank in the correspondence between July 1513 and March 1515, which is much to be regretted, as there is therefore no notice from himself of the noble work, on which he is generally believed to have been at this time occupied, the statue of Moses. In the letter of March these words occur « should I not have arrived there; (Florence) I think to depart tomorrow the last day of March [2] » signed in the usual way at Rome and received in Florence on the 5th of April 1515, Michelangelo then appears to have visited Florence and to have staid a short time, as the next letter dated 28th April 1515 says:

« Buonarroto, I have arrived safely in Rome thank God. » [3] He then orders a stuff of which a piece of dress was to be made, and

[1] Cavalier Gaetano Milanesi. Letters of Michelangelo to his relatives.
[2] The Buonarroti Archives.
[3] British Museum.

desires that three hundred and ninety ducats should be sent from his deposit at Sta Maria Novella to Rome. At this time he began to expend of his own on the monument. It appears that not long after this, Michelangelo had reason to think that his work might be interrupted, for on the 16th of June of the same year he writes to Buonarroto « I wish you to go to the Governor of the hospital of Sta Maria Nuova, and that you arrange to pay to my account here one thousand four hundred ducats of those which he has of mine, for it is needful for me to make a great effort this summer to finish quickly this work, for I think that I must be at the commands of the Pope. [1] And for this I have bought perhaps twenty migliaia of copper to cast certain figures. Money is needful. »

This letter indicates that considerable progress must have been made with the monument, as Michelangelo spoke so hopefully, and it is also apparent that he was withdrawing large sums from his banker in Florence to enable him to prosecute it more rapidly. On the 7th of July he writes to Buonarroto to forward the rest of the money at his credit, and he makes for the first time mention of marble from Pietrasanta. « Although no dependence is to be placed on Michele, still this thing which I require I think he knows, that is, if I am to have marbles this summer from Pietrasanta; for I learn from Domenico Boninsegni that he hears that the road is nearly done: say however to Michele that he answer me. Nothing more. Mind your affairs and especially your soul, for this now seems necessary. » Michele had been sent to excavate marble, and this letter makes the first allusion to an enterprise, and to public works, which afterwards involved much trouble and personal sacrifice to Michelangelo. The rediscovery had been made of a good quality of

[1] This the cavalier Gaetano Milanesi in a note to one of the letters of Michelangelo to his family, thinks shadows out the coming project for the front of S. Lorenzo.

marble near Serravezza, which is not far from Pietrasanta and in Tuscan territory. Both Pope Leo and the Cardinal Giulio de'Medici took a deep interest in this, for they foresaw a profitable trade in marble in opposition to that of Carrara, and the wealthy corporation of wool traders in Florence undertook to make the road from the new quarries to the sea. On the first of the same year Michelangelo again writes to Buonarroto that he had great need of marble, and that he could not go personally to Carrara. The work doubtless of the monument was being actively carried on. On the fourth of August, Michelangelo returns earnestly to the subject of a supply of marble, and on the eleventh he thus writes:

« Buonarroto, By your last I learn, that the Governor of the hospital had not yet realised my money: this seems to me a bad sign: I am afraid that I may have to attack him. Since I returned here (from Florence) I have not worked: I have only attended to the making of models and to putting the work in order, so as to be in a position to make a great effort to finish it in two or three years by the aid of assistants: and so I have bound myself, and I have incurred great expense trusting to the money which I have there: [1] believing to have it to my order, as reason and usage hold with deposits, and were it wanting to me, I should indeed be in a scrape. » [2] These expressions show clearly not only how earnestly Michelangelo worked at the monument, but what was the nature of his proceedings and of his anticipations. At this time he was not working in marble, he was directing the formation of models, and he intended to employ as many assistants as might be necessary to execute the work within a given time. He withdrew funds from his bank in

[1] At Florence.
[2] Buonarroti Archives.

Florence, to purchase large quantities of metal for the bronzes. How different all this is from the usual statements regarding the solitary worker. He is found adhering to the customs of artists of his time, employing artists and carvers to aid him, and trusting to the hands of others to enable him to complete his contract.

He was in correspondence with an eminent sculptor surnamed Zara,[1] whom he mentions as anxious to serve him. At a later period he did so, acting as agent for Michelangelo at Carrara and giving orders in his name, as appears in a document dated the 13th of November 1522, preserved in the Archives of the Commune of Carrara.[2]

Towards the close of 1515 Michelangelo undertook to paint a picture for Pierfrancesco Borgherini;[3] in a letter to Buonarroto he thus expresses himself: «Know, that I have no wish to give trouble or annoyance of any kind to Pierfrancesco Borgherini, for I wish to be as little under obligation as I can, seeing that I have promised to do for him something in painting, and it seems to be thought that I demand payment in advance; but I will not do it as a matter of business, but because I like him, and I will take nothing from him, for love and not for business, I shall serve him more willingly than I ever served any one for he is a worthy youth.»[4] Michelangelo notwithstanding his good will was unable to execute the picture and recommended

[1] Buonarroti Archives. Lo Zara da Settignano, whose name was Domenico. The Cavaliere Milanesi believes him to have been Domenico di Sandro di Bartolo Fancelli, a good sculptor born in 1469 and died at Saragozza in Spain in 1519. Domenico was the sculptor of the noble monument in the Church of St Thomas of the Dominicans of Avila to the Prince Johan only son of Ferdinando the Catholic. He was commissioned on the 15th of July 1518 to sculpture a monument for the Cardinal Ximenes for the price of 2100 ducats in gold, but he died before beginning it.

[2] According to signor Frediani in his «Ragionamento sulle gite di Michelangelo» to Carrara, who quotes from the Communal Archives of Carrara the name of Messer Pietro da Corano, whom he in a foot-note describes as having made the famous tomb of Avila as may be found registered in the Archives of the notaries of Carrara.

[3] Banker in Rome.

[4] Buonarroti MS. British Museum.

that Andrea del Sarto should be employed, with which suggestion Borgherini was not well satisfied. However he ordered of Del Sarto, Pontormo and Granacci some pictures for the decoration of a room. Four of these are now in the Florence and Pitti Galleries, having been purchased in 1584 by the Grand Duke Francesco: the two by Del Sarto for three hundred and sixty crowns, and the others by Pontormo for ninety.

In 1515 it was diplomatically arranged that Leo the tenth and Francis the first, king of France, should meet at Bologna to consider their mutual interests, and to cement such friendship as could in those days subsist between princes.

Michelangelo briefly alludes to this meeting in a letter from Rome, dated the sixth of November 1515. « The Pope has departed from Rome, and it is said here that he goes to Florence. »

To describe this visit to Florence has been a favourite theme with numerous writers of more or less reputation, but the unpretentious account of it addressed to Michelangelo by his brother Buonarroto is the most appropriate to these pages. Buonarroto, as a member of the Municipality of Florence, accompanied the papal cortege from Florence to Bologna and back again, he thus writes:

« Most dear. To give thee news of something from this place, especially of the arrival of our Lord the Pope, although I know that such things interest thee but little, still having time to spare, I write thee four lines, and although I believe that thou hast heard of these things, still I write. As I certainly believe our Holy Father entered Florence on the thirtieth of November 1515, St Andrea's day. He was received with the greatest respect, and the noise of loud cries of Palle, so that the world seemed turned upside down, and thus he entered with a great Court and extraordinary magnificence, with many of the citizens

of Florence, and in good order. Amongst others there were certain of youths selected from amongst the first in the land, all dressed in uniform with doublets of violet satin, all made in the same manner, and with gilt staves in their hands, these going before his throne, which was a beautiful sight. Before the Pope was his guard, then came his grooms who carried him under a rich canopy of brocade, which was supported by cardinals, and round the throne was the Signory. Thus amidst that people; he was carried to Santa Maria del Fiore with infinite devotion, where at the High Altar he went through certain ceremonies. Thence in the same manner he was conducted to the Hall of the Popes, but before leaving the church he gave plenary indulgence to all then present, and I may tell thee, that there were many of the people. By the time that he reached the hall, it was evening, and the court and others were licensed. On the following day, which was saturday, the Signory visited him, and all kissed his foot; and the gonfaloniere having spoken, we obtained license and returned to the palace. There was no rest to the sound of bells and firing for three days, and there were great triumphal arches in ten places, which were handsome, and also an obelisk at the end of the Trinity Bridge, and the front of Sta Maria del Fiore was well done. In so much as this was a very great festival, so the poor received alms, and from the door of the Hall of the Pope a great deal of money was thrown, and he left much to be given away, and thus the Carpenters and Painters made a good harvest, except poor Baia, who being in the Piazza, where an arch had been constructed by him with Sangallo, and whilst talking with a friend, a piece of artillery being fired, an iron wedge from the carriage struck him under the knee and broke his leg, which they had to saw off, and so in four days he died. This was the only misfortune attending these festivals.

Then on the third of December he departed and went to Bologna arriving there on the eighth, and on the eleventh the king entered Bologna, and having entered, he went at once to visit the Holy Father, and kneeling, he kissed his foot with great respect, and on the thirteenth mass was sung in St Petronio the day of Sta Lucia, and the first who presented water for the hand washing, was a great French gentleman, called Monsignore de Lauson, and the second Monsignore di Bordone, and the third the grand master of the king and the fourth the king himself. And in the evening the king supped with the Pope, and served him with water for his hands, in that showing his obedience, and these have been held to be great things, but I do not describe all, lest I should be too long. On the fifteenth the king departed and went towards Milan, and on the eighteenth the Pope set out for Florence, and entered it on the twenty-second which was saturday. On Christmas day mass was sung in Sta Maria del Fiore, which was very fine. The Signory attended and when the mass was said, it was the privilege of one of them to present water for the Pope's hands; this fell to Giannozzo Salviati, and inasmuch as it fell to me to be proposed, I had to go the second to present the water to the Pope, the third time it was the Duke of Camerino, the fourth it was Piero Ridolfi the gonfaloniere of Justice. The said mass being thus ended, the Pope with much ceremony made a gift to the Signory, or rather to the Palace of a handsome sword adorned with gold and silver, and with it a Berret of gray velvet embroidered with pearls, as symbols of Justice; then accompanied by many Prelates and chaimberlains we returned to the Palace.»

Buonarroto de' Buonarroti Simone being one of the Priors, he received like others of the Signory the privilege of bearing the balls and fleur de lis on his shield of arms and the title of Count Palatine.

During the Pope's stay in Florence, he visited San Lorenzo the church of his ancestors, which contained the sepulchre of his father, over which he was seen to shed tears. It was after this visit, that he resolved to complete the façade of the church with unexampled magnificence, it having been left like those of so many other churches in Florence in an incomplete state. San Lorenzo was built by the orders of Cosimo de' Medici « The father of his country » from designs by Filippo Brunelleschi. The interior is handsome, but somewhat cold in effect, increased by tasteless modern colouring, whilst the general appearance is further depreciated by a false ceiling. The front, notwithstanding the resolution of Pope Leo that it should be finished in honour of his father, is still a black heavy mass of rubble wall, a fitting monument of a sad portion of the history of Michelangelo.

Having made up his mind to erect a front of more ample magnificence at a time when the Medicis were at the height of their power, Leo's first idea was to partition the execution amongst a number of artists. Raffael d'Urbino, who had been invited to accompany the Pope to Florence, was commissioned to make a design, as were Baccio d'Agnolo, Giuliano da Sangallo, Andrea and Iacopo Sansovino. Michelangelo's labours on the tomb of Julius were interrupted, and he also was called upon to prepare a design. The learned Cavaliere Gaetano Milanesi thinks that the wish to complete the front of San Lorenzo presented itself to the mind of the Pope so early as June 1515, when Michelangelo wrote to his brother that he anticipated being employed by the Pope, [1] and must therefore make a great effort to finish the monument that summer. Whether this be an accurate surmise or not, Michelangelo made a design which was preferred to those by other artists. His victory is the more remarkable that this was his first important architectural design. The ver-

[1] Letters of Michelangelo to his family. Edited by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 115, fort note.

satile powers thus evinced cannot seem to us, in those days, less than marvellous. During the current of his history up to this period, when he was thirty years of age, there is no indication of the devotion of any part of his time to the study of architecture, nor does the architectural part of his sketch for the tomb of Julius show either much invention or aptitude. The details are common place, and there is not a trace of measured geometric proportion. Even a cursory examination of the drawing shows, that the artist did not consider, how harmony of detail was to be united with practicability of execution. During the time which elapsed between making the sketches for the monument and the design for the front of San Lorenzo, Michelangelo observed and studied the monuments of ancient architecture, and his appreciation of them is indicated in his sharp attack upon Bramante, for his irreverent and scandalous destruction of the ancient columns of the Basilica of St Peter's. Michelangelo was opposed to a number of eminent artists, including Raffael, who had studied architecture under the direction of Bramante. His success proved to be one of the most unfortunate events of his history, for it led to the enforced breach of his contract with the powerful family of the Della Rovere. The defeated artists, or most of them became his enemies, and he was compelled by the Pope to spend a great deal of his time in the defiles of the Carrara mountains, opening new quarries, making roads, and devoting his time to occupations beneath him as an artist. Leo evidently disliked the presence of the independent and plain spoken Michelangelo at his refined court, and kept him from it by employing him at a distance; a stain on the Popes reputation, and in a secondary degree on that of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, afterwards Pope Clement, which nothing they did for art, can lessen or remove.

It was natural that Michelangelo should resent the treatment to which he was thus subjected. The stoppage of his favourite

work, with all its consequences and pecuniary loss to him, and finally after all his labour in the quarries, the abandonment of the scheme for completing San Lorenzo, led Michelangelo in the bitterness of his heart to write: « Pope Leo desiring that he should not make the monument (of Julius) pretended to wish to erect the front of San Lorenzo in Florence.» That Leo was indifferent to the progress of the monument was evinced by his conduct, but that he only pretended to wish to erect the front of San Lorenzo seems an extravagant assertion.

If the drawing which exist in the Gallery of the Ufizi at Florence, and the model said to be by Baccio d'Agniolo, which precisely resembles this drawing, really represent the façade of San Lorenzo as proposed by Michelangelo, Florence and architecture have lost nothing by the failure to execute the design, nor is it possible to understand how the other architects, competitors with Michelangelo, could be beaten by this feeble conception, which is so unworthy to be the completion of the work of Brunelleschi. A circumstance which throws doubt over this drawing and the model, is the absence of provision for bold groups of sculpture, which would have been certain to characterize a design of Michelangelo. It is in a thin timid fifteenth century manner without a shadow of the breadth and grandeur of Michelangelo's subsequent style, has no relation to the form of the actual front of the church, and is as poor in detail as it is ill conceived in the general mass. The drawing in the Buonarroti mansion is a better design, and may be accepted with far more probability as by Michelangelo. Sculpture plays an important part, and it is altogether grander in its general idea.

It is not apparently drawn to measurement, at all events not with any care. The space left for the central doorway is too small and other parts of the drawing do not harmonize with each other, nor with the shape of the actual building. In this design,

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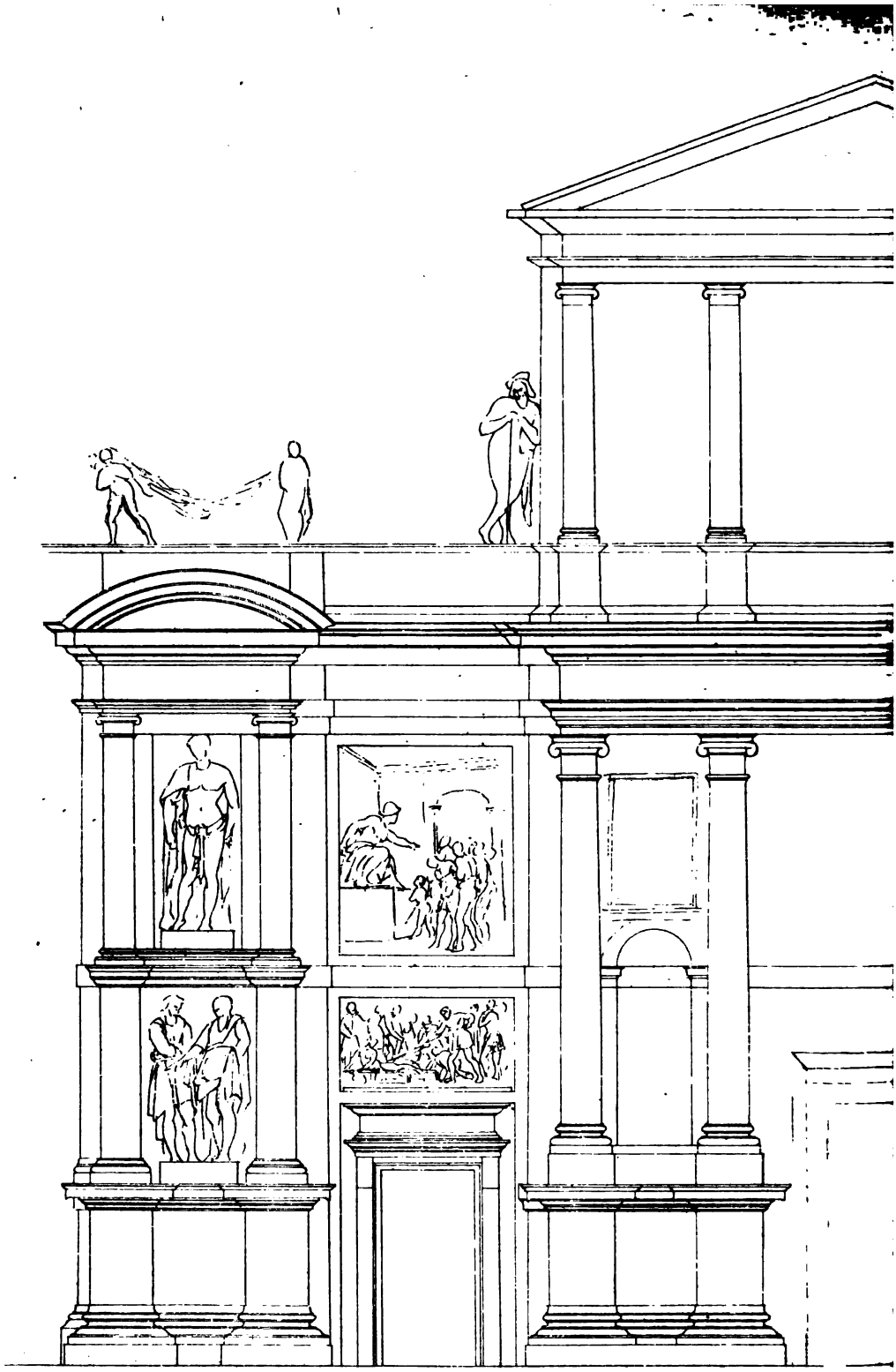

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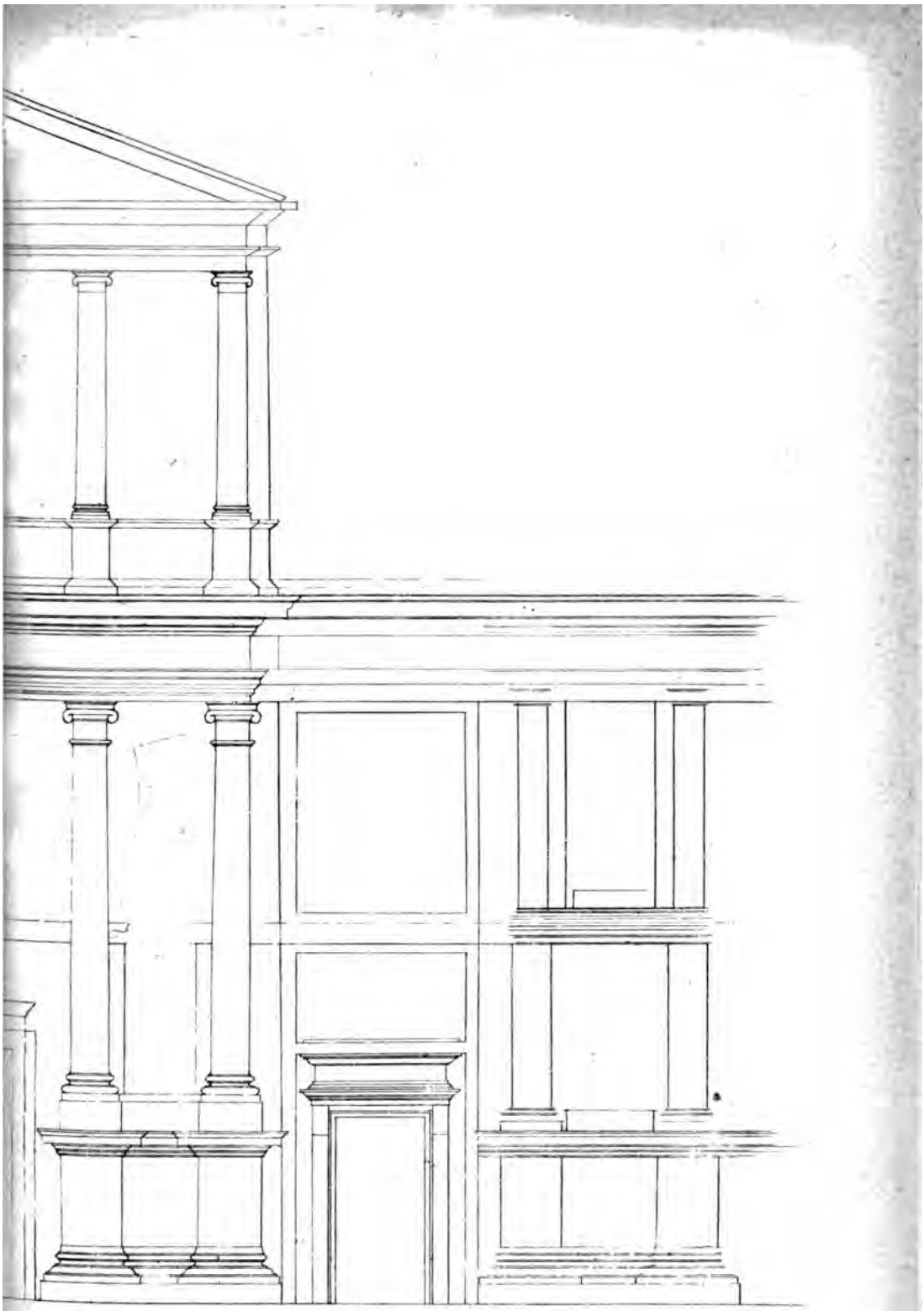

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as in the other attributed to him, Michelangelo departed from the constructive form of that by his great predecessor Brunelleschi, and proposed to erect a front of a totally different character from the original architecture of the church of St Lawrence.

His example has been followed in numberless instances by other Italian Architects, of high reputation, but in this, they also resembled the great medieval church builders who almost invariably made their additions in the style prevalent in their time however unlike it might be to that previously followed. In medieval architecture this did not produce the discordant effects observable in that of the renaissance. Under any circumstances it would have been impossible for Michelangelo to limit his ideas of design so as to imitate the somewhat timid and arid details of Brunelleschi, whose adaptations of classic forms were very imperfect.

After the decision in favour of Michelangelo's design, no immediate effect was given to it, and he continued his work on the monument of Julius without interruption till the close of 1516.

Chapter X

At this period of the history of Michelangelo, it is more than ever necessary to proceed with caution amidst conflicting statements. The will of the Pope, the interests of the Della Rovere, and the wishes of Michelangelo, arrayed on the side of the latter, came into conflict, but arbitrary power triumphed.

The appointment of Michelangelo, as sole architect and sculptor of the new front of San Lorenzo, and his consequently necessary residence in Florence, except when in the Carrara mountains, were of threatening augury to the progress of the monument.

When in addition he was compelled by the policy of the Pope to superintend the opening of new quarries and road making, his power of fulfilling his contract with the Executors of Julius was further impeded.

It was impossible to escape the conviction that the completion of the monument was postponed, whilst the expenses were to be

seriously increased by the transfer of the works in progress from Rome to Florence, although the Pope did something as related by Michelangelo to diminish that outlay.

In the struggle against the power of the Pope, the Executors introduced a provision into a new contract which Michelangelo accepted, namely that he should undertake no new commission till the monument was completed.[1] This engagement proved futile and was entirely disregarded by Leo.

During the peaceful period which elapsed between the death of Julius and the close of 1516, Michelangelo made considerable progress with the monument, to which he devoted his whole attention. As has been already stated, and as he has himself recorded, the front of the architectural basement now in San Pietro in Vincola was executed, so were the statues of Captives, now in the sculpture Gallery of the Louvre,[2] and it may also be believed that the greatest of Michelangelo's, as of all modern works, the statue of Moses, was sculptured at this time, being then intended to form one of the group to be placed over the cornice but now occupying so different a position in the Monument. Michelangelo's purchase of a large quantity of copper indicates that the models for the reliefs, which formed part of his second design, were ready for casting.

The victory which Michelangelo achieved in the competition for the front of San Lorenzo, over rivals of such celebrity in the arts, does not appear to have raised any doubt on his part, that his work in the monument might be interfered with, for in the autumn of 1516 he went from Rome to Carrara to purchase marble to be conveyed to Rome. Such indeed was his confidence at this time, that towards the close of October 1516 he took up his residence in the house of Francesco Pellicia, contemplating

[1] This appears to be alluded to in his letter of the 14th of August see ante.
[2] Catalogue of the Louvre « Sculpteurs Italiens XVI siècle » n. 28 and 29.

a stay of some months at Carrara. On the first of November he entered into a contract with the same Pellicia [1] to supply four blocks of marble for statues, each measuring eight feet seven inches in height, and four feet five inches in width and depth, precisely the proportions requisite for making the five sitting statues, which with that of Moses were to occupy the platform over the cornice of the second design. As six were required, either Michelangelo possessed a block for the sixth or delayed the order.

At the same time fifteen blocks were contracted for, nearly eight feet six inches high, about a foot more than the height of the two statues in the Louvre, [2] but it is fair to assume that the rough blocks were ordered of a size in excess of the finished work. As ten only were required for the Captives, some of these may have been intended for the figures of Victory to be placed in the niches.

The fact that these blocks of marble were ordered at this time, shows that the general provisions of the second contract were still in force.

Whilst Michelangelo was busy at Carrara, he was alarmed by letters from Buonarroto informing him that his father was attacked by dangerous illness. On the receipt of the second of these letters, he thus wrote to his brother:

« Buonarroto, I have learnt from thy last two letters, first that Ludovico was about to die, and how afterwards that the doctor said, that if he had no other attack, he was out of danger: since it is so I shall not leave this for Florence, for it would incon-

[1] Archives of Carrara cited by Frediani Receipt of Francesco Pellicia for one hundred ducats in advance for nineteen figures the marble to be taken from his quarry.

[2] In the official Catalogue these statues are given as two metres and fifteen centimetres seven feet and half an inch: whereas Michelangelo says four braccia or two metres thirty two centimetres, seven feet seven, which is very nearly the height of the Captive with one arm raised.

venience me greatly: but if he is again in danger, I would by all means wish to see him before he dies should I die with him; but I have a good hope that he will be better, and therefore I do not go: but should he again fall ill, from which God preserve him and us: arrange, that nothing whatever is wanting to him needful to his soul and of the sacraments of the church: and let him settle what we shall do for the good of his soul. Of the things needful for the body see that he wants for nothing; for I have laboured but for him, to aid him in his needs before he dies. Arrange so, that thy wife shall attend him lovingly. I will restore to all of you whatever is required. Have no hesitation to take from what we possess. Nothing else occurs to me. Peace be with you and advise me, for I am distressed and in much fear.

The twenty-third of November 1516.

MICHELAGNIOLO
Sculptor, Carrara.

The proceedings of Michelangelo at Carrara were now interrupted by a summons from the Pope to go to Rome: he has himself recorded what took place. «Being at Carrara for my affairs, that is for marbles to be transported to Rome for the sepulchre of Pope Julius in 1516, Pope Leo sent for me on account of the front of San Lorenzo, which he wished erected in Florence. Consequently I on the first of December left Carrara and went to Rome, and there I made a design for the said front, upon which Pope Leo commissioned me to cause to be quarried at Carrara the marbles for the said work. After which I having returned from Rome to Carrara the last day of December, Pope Leo sent me there for the excavation of marble one thousand ducats by the hands of Iacopo Salviati, which were brought to

me by a servant of his called Bentivoglio, and I received the said money about the eighth of next month, that is January, and I gave a receipt. » [1]

On arriving in Rome, Michelangelo by desire of the Pope laid before him the plans prepared for the front of San Lorenzo, which were finally agreed upon, and he was directed to establish himself in Florence and at Carrara when necessary, and to go on with the work. The Executors of Julius protested in vain against this enforced rupture of their contract with the sculptor of the monument, who also in vain pleaded his enagagement to the Executors. The Pope assured him that he would settle that with the Executors, but all that he would sanction was, that the marbles should be taken from Rome to Florence, and that Michelangelo should be allowed to proceed with them at intervals.

The effect of these arbitrary proceedings on the interests of the Della Rovere and the artist may be estimated, when it is considered that large sums had been advanced and disbursed, that Michelangelo had withdrawn from Florence a considerable portion of his savings, which in his confident belief that the work would not be interfered with, he had expended upon it. A new workshop had been provided in the quarter of Trevi, and the marbles conveyed thither from the Macello dei Corvi at considerable outlay. It was now proposed to move them or important parts of them to Florence, a proceeding certainly attended with risk and heavy expense, whilst the models ready for casting in bronze must be sacrificed. At all events nothing more is heard of them. All engagements with assistants and workmen had to be dissolved with loss to every body. In fine that which may be termed an extensive business was broken up. No wonder that under these circumstances the Executors were grieved and mor-

[1] British Museum Buonarroti MSS.

tified, and that Michelangelo is said to have shed tears of vexation. It seems a mockery that the Pope should, as a special favour. have proposed to forego the duties chargeable on the marbles to be transported to Florence!

Michelangelo visited Florence on his way from Rome; on one of these occasions his father, of feeble intelligence and easily swayed by mischief makers, suddenly left his house and retired to his villa at Settignano. The letter which Michelangelo then wrote to him, is an instance amongst many of his filial tenderness of sentiment and christian spirit.

« Dearest Father. I have been much surprised by your conduct the other day, when I did not find you at home: and now hearing that you complain of me, and that I have driven you away, I wonder much more: for I know in my conscience that since the day of my birth till now, it never has occurred to me to do anything great or small against you, and all the labour that I have undergone has been for love of you, and since I returned from Rome, you know that I have always united myself with you, and you also know that I have confirmed you in what I have; yet it is not long since you were offended, when I said and promised to you never to fail in aiding you with all my strength, whilst I live, and again I affirm it.

It surprises me, you so quickly forget all; you have had experience of me now for thirty years, you and your sons, and you know that I have thought and acted always for your well being whenever I was able, how can you go about saying that I sent you away? Do you not see the mischief which you do when you say that I drove you away? No more is wanting to fill the measure of all my other troubles, all endured for love of you. You do not make me a good return. Now let it be as

you desire, I will assume that I sent you away, that I have caused you shame and vexation, and for all these things I ask you to pardon me. Consider this as pardoning a son who has led a bad life, and done you all the evil possible in this world, and so again I ask you to pardon me as an ill doer as I am, and do not give me the reputation of having driven you away, for it imports me more, than you may believe. I also am your son.

The bearer of this will be Rafaello da Gagliano. I beseech you for the love of God and not for mine that you come to Florence, for I must go away, and I have that to say to you which is important, and I cannot go up to Settignano. As I have heard from Pietro [1] who lives with me, from his own mouth certain things which do not please me, I send him this morning to Pistoja, and he shall not return to me, for he shall not be the ruin of our home: and as to you all, who knew that I was not aware of his behaviour, you ought long since to have informed me, and such a scandal would not have taken place.

I am anxious to go, but I cannot till I have seen you in your home and have spoken to you. Therefore I beseech you to suppress your angry feelings and come back. » [2]

Oppressed with care Michelangelo returned to Carrara. It can only be a matter of surmise, but it is highly probable, that he requested Pellicia to pause in the preparation of the marbles for the monument of Julius. Under the circumstances this would have been but common prudence; justified by the necessity which he soon was under, and which he must have foreseen of abrogating his contract for the blocks, which he did on the seventh of April 1517, receiving back the hundred ducats he had advanced, which would hardly have been the case, had any of the marble been supplied.

[1] Pietro d'Urbano Michelangelo's assistant.
[2] Buonarroti MSS. British Museum.

Both the Executors and the artist appear to have seen that the monument could not now be carried on under the provisions of the second contract, and they entered upon a third by which the design was again altered and the proportions of the statues diminished, which is enough to show that whatever its date, it could not have been drawn out before the bargain with Pellicia in November, in which the proportions of the second design were adhered to.

A model was made, the width of which is stated at twenty-one feet, after the marble monument had been already sculptured of a width of almost twenty-three feet. The architectural design was adhered to with the same pedestals and niches and the same crowning cornice of the first story. There were to be six statues in front, but the conquered Provinces were now dispensed with. It may have been felt that the time was past to embody them in marble. There was now also to be one niche only on each flank, so that the projection of the monument from the wall was reduced more than half, and there were to be only twelve statues beneath the cornice and one relief, instead of twenty-four statues and three reliefs. This was a great reduction of the pomp of the design, a great diminution in the number of the captive liberal Arts, and a still greater reduction of the number of Victories.

On the summit of this basement a shrine was to be erected, within which was to be placed the effigy of the Pontiff on his sarcophagus, with two heavenly guardians only. There were to be also only four sitting figures, stated to be six feet eight inches high, but a new feature was introduced, being a sitting statue of our Lady on the summit, seven feet seven inches in height.

Bronze reliefs placed above the heads of the sitting figures were to decorate the shrine, and three others were to be placed in other parts of it.

The whole of the statues described in this third contract amount to nineteen, instead of forty included in that of the agreement of the sixth May 1515.

The most remarkable features of these successive contracts are the departure from certain fixed proportions both of the architectural parts and of the statues, involving a serious loss of outlay and of work. By the change made in the proportions of the statues to be placed on the pedestals, those of captives executed in the Macello de'Corvi were apparently to be sacrificed. The new sitting figures are described as one foot shorter than that of Moses, therefore it also was to be put on one side. The two standing figures, now on the tomb as it is seen in San Pietro in Vincola, are precisely of the proportions specified in this contract. These proportions therefore cannot be got rid of; they remain inexplicable; but these changes show on the part of the artist a singular indifference to his personal interests, and readiness to embrace new conditions of labour.

As the architectural part of the design, as it is now seen, was completed by this time with at least three statues, and as large sums had been already expended on these works, it is difficult to understand the sacrifice made, both of work and outlay. Yet that it was made is certain. The statue of Moses was finally adapted to the monument, but was placed on the first stage, instead of over the cornice. The statues of Captives executed before this date and ranking amongst Michelangelo's finest works, were afterwards put aside, and finally given away.

This subject of the monument must again be frequently referred to, for it is not a mere episode in the life of Michelangelo, which might be told and then parted with. It permeates a great part of his life, its turbid current sweeping along and embittering his existence, injuring his health, impairing his prosperity, driving him into extravagant acts of self sacrifice,

even momentarily darkening his moral perceptions. He was the victim of the unscrupulous jealousies of the successors of Julius, although in the first place of the incredible arrogance and self-love of that Pontiff, who could invent such a memorial of himself, for it is evident from its history that all the ideas which pervaded it, could not have originated with Michelangelo.

It becomes of the highest interest to observe how Michelangelo employed himself at Carrara in his new office of architect. There can be no reasonable doubt that he gave himself with his usual energy to the preparation of working drawings and models.

Hitherto he had been comparatively unknown as an architect, and as by the arbitrary will of Julius he had been compelled to become a fresco painter, now by an equally despotic exercise of power, he was forced to study practical architecture.

His mind was so constituted, such was his genius and his perseverance, that as we have seen him in the Sixtine struggling with the difficulties of an art, which he repeatedly said « was not his profession, » and conquering them, so now we find him at Carrara mastering the details of another and still newer profession.

Blocks of marble for columns, cornices and other details of an architectural design, are not ordered fortuitously, but are cut from the quarry and hewn according to measurements and working plans supplied by an architect. It was therefore necessary before ordering the excavation of these, and the subsequent work upon them, that Michelangelo should prepare drawings or models to scale, and if before he had not studied these practical details, it became needful to do so now. Some time elapsed between his arrival from Rome and his first orders for marbles, and that he was engaged in the studies and preparations suggested, is proved by a letter to his brother Buonarroto, dated

the thirteenth of March 1517, which shows clearly that he was engaged in the manner supposed. « I do not expect to go there (to Florence) for several months, for I have had a commission from the Pope to erect the front of San Lorenzo; as you may have heard. There is no need that I go to see that Baccio d'Agnolo hastens the model, for I have made one in my own way.... and I have no more need of him.» [1] He had commissioned Baccio to make a model for him, distrusting his own experience of detail, but that architect was unwilling to make it or was dilatory, and Michelangelo set to work himself in Carrara. Thus it may reasonably be assumed, that although his enforced labours at Carrara and Serravezza have usually been considered a waste of his time, he in reality employed it usefully, and there laid the foundation of that practical knowledge of architecture which enabled him subsequently to distinguish himself as an architect, and finally to erect the boldest structure of his or of any preceding age, the Cupola of St Peter's. His genius and industry turned to good account his enforced stay in the marble quarries.

At Carrara then the subject of architectural design and structure occupied his thoughts. If his attention was for a time diverted from sculpture and painting, it was earnestly given to the study of practical architecture under advantageous opportunities. He witnessed and directed the transport of heavy weights and the preparation of the necessary machinery. He learnt to estimate the cost and value of work and of materials, and he thus undoubtedly derived great advantages from his enforced residence in the Carrara mountains.

To appreciate accurately the conduct pursued towards him by the Pope and his advisers, it must be remembered in the

[1] Consequently the model in the Academy at Florence ascribed to Baccio cannot be his as he evidently did not make a model.

first place, that it was the usage of the age, whatever may be thought of it now, that a sculptor should visit the marble quarries of Carrara, to select the marble which he required, to contract with the quarrymen, to direct the blocking out of his proposed statue, which was done from his drawings, and Michelangelo also sometimes worked himself when there, and so by a certain amount of preparation diminished the weights of the blocks to be transported. All this a sculptor might do, the conditions being favourable, and in doing so he did nothing inconsistent with his profession or status, he could command the services of the most skilled workmen then in Italy, and was not called upon to consider or devise means of transport, but only to employ those ready to his hand.

But it was a very different thing, when after the attention of the Pope had been drawn to the advantages to Tuscany of excavating marble on Tuscan territory, that he should give orders to Michelangelo to proceed to the defiles and bare mountain slopes above Serravezza in search of marble in quarries long abandoned and from which there were no roads, where there were no skilled workmen, and should have thus constituted him Engineer and road maker, in fine quarryman.

It may be doubted, whether in the history of art there may be found a comparable instance of so cruel a disregard of the claims of genius, of so pitiless an indignity as the unworthy labour forced upon Michelangelo by the despotic will of Leo X. His letters and those of his friends will show what was thought at the time of this tyrannous abuse of authority and of this unpardonable waste of Michelangelo's talents. He protested but in vain against his employment in the new quarries, for he saw clearly that whilst the monument of Julius must be indefinitely postponed, it would be long before marble in sufficient quantities could be got ready for the front of San Lorenzo.

It also seems that he did not think the marble of such good quality as that of Carrara. Time has proved that this was an error of judgment, and excellent marble for the purposes of sculpture is now found in the quarries of Serravezza. [1]

Michelangelo continued his contracts with the Carrarese, whilst he prepared to excavate elsewhere. They regarded with the utmost disfavour the opening of the new quarries, and accused him as the author of proceedings so hostile to their interests. On the other hand the Pope and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici taxed him with partiality towards the Carrarese, and of hostility to their plans for promoting a trade in marble on Tuscan territory, and by order of Leo, the Cardinal thus addressed him:

« We have received your letters and shewn them to our Lord, and considering your proceedings, calculated to be in favour of Carrara, you have caused no small surprise to His Holiness and to us, because your opinion does not correspond with what we have heard from Iacopo Salviati, who has visited the quarries and marbles of Pietrasanta with a number of intelligent masters, and he points out that there are marbles in great quantities, of fine quality and easily transported; which being the case, we suspect that you desire for your own convenience to vaunt the marbles of Carrara, and to discredit those of Pietrasanta; which you certainly ought not to do, seeing what faith we always have placed in you; therefore we say to you that postponing every

[1] It had been pointed out to the Pope that marble of an excellent quality might be excavated near Serravezza on Tuscan territory. Quarries had been worked there before and abandoned, and it was now proposed to reopen them. On the eighteenth of May 1515 the Commune of Serravezza deliberated as to the gift of territory within it to Florence, especially the Monte Altissimo and the Monte de Ceraxola with sufficient land to make a road to the sea shore.

Both Pope Leo and the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici saw such advantages to the interests of Tuscany from the opening up of the quarries that they warmly supported the scheme. One of the great corporations of Florence, the wool Staplers, undertook in the general interest to make the road from the mountains to the sea, and Pope Leo subscribed a thousand florins to the expenses.

consideration His Holiness wills that in all the works which are to be done for St Peter's, for Santa Reparata (the Cathedral of Florence) and for the front of San Lorenzo, the marbles are to be taken from Pietrasanta and from no other place, for the above mentioned reasons, and above all that it is understood that they will cost less than at Carrara, but even should they cost more, in every way, His Holiness desires that thus it be done to direct and conduct the business of Pietrasanta for the public good of the city; therefore see that you execute what we have commanded; and do not fail, for to act otherwise would be contrary to the will of His Holiness and ours, and we should have cause to be dissatisfied with you. Our Dominic is to write to you to the same effect, reply to him when you have occasion, and soon; banishing from your mind any sort of obstinacy, Health. »

The Pope and Cardinal, as Tuscans may have done well in promoting the opening of a new trade in marble on Tuscan territory, but they were as clearly wrong in forcing Michelangelo to act as their agent. Amongst the « number of intelligent masters » who had reported favourably of the marble producing capacity of the mountains of Serravezza, they might surely have found a fitting and willing instrument to carry out their purpose and to act as engineer. Instead of doing so, and thereby meriting the approbation of all, this cruel letter shows how blind both were to right feeling, and even to sound practical principles of action.

Michelangelo devoted himself with his usual zeal to the work, which was forced upon him. There is no finer part of his character, than his capacity to adapt himself to circumstances. Thus in April he purchased a site in Florence to build a house and workshops in anticipation of his labours for San Lorenzo.

He became satisfied that he had better enter into a contract with the Pope to execute the new front by estimate, and the following letter to Domenico Buoninsegni offering to do so explains the sentiments by which he was animated, and shows his generous nature and sense of duty. Notwithstanding the treatment which he experienced, here are the offers which he made, to carry the Pope's wishes regarding the completion of the Church to a successful issue:

« I have various things to say to you, read for a little with patience, for it is important; and it is this; that I have the will to make this work, the front of San Lorenzo, whether in respect of architecture or sculpture, the master piece of all Italy; but it is needful that the Pope and the Cardinal resolve quickly whether they will that I should do it or not. And if they wish me to do it, it is needful to come to some determination; that is either to give it to me on contract and to confide every thing to me, or else in some other way as they may think best which I know not of; my reasons for this you will understand. » At this point Michelangelo alludes to the difficulty of finding marble of good quality, and to his being obliged to lay out money unfavourably, he then adds:

« The cost of the front according to the manner in which I intend to execute it, and to set it agoing, is above all, that the Pope shall have no trouble about it, it cannot be less, according to the careful consideration which I have given it, than thirty five thousand ducats in gold, and for that sum I will undertake to do it in six years. With this condition, that within six months I shall want on account for marble at least one thousand ducats, and if it does not please the Pope to do this, it is needful either that the expenses, which I have incurred here, be placed to my

account or loss, and that I restore a thousand ducats to the Pope, or that he employs some one to carry out the work, for I for various reasons desire by all means to leave this. As to the price, once the work is commenced, if I discovered that it could be done for less, I should treat the Pope and the Cardinal with such good faith, that I should inform them even more readily, than if loss fell upon me; but I rather hope to do the work in such a manner, that the price will be sufficient. Messer Domenico, I beseech you to reply to me decidedly as to the wish of the Pope and the Cardinal, and this will be a gratification to me even more so, than all those which you have already done me. » [1]

This is the letter of a man of business and practical architect. It shows what had been the nature of Michelangelo's studies at Carrara and his knowledge of the cost of material, workmanship and transport, and that he had informed himself of the nature and extent of the expenses which he must encounter in Florence, of the outlay needful on his own account for sculpture and the wages of assistants. It is surprising that he should ask for so small, indeed obviously inadequate a sum in advance, with the charges which were before him in the new quarries. Six years appears a brief estimate of the time required for so great an undertaking, and it plainly indicates that, as in the case of the Julian monument, Michelangelo contemplated the employment of a considerable body of artist assistants.

On the eighth of march 1517, Buoninsegni wrote to Michelangelo that he had shown the letter to the Cardinal de'Medici, who had been greatly pleased by it, « especially in respect of the great good will which he had, as to the execution of the work of the front and that the expenses which he had incur-

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

red in excavating marble » would be made up to him, but he added that the Pope wished to see the model, and he advised him to make one of wood either in Carrara, where he then was, or else in Florence, and to send it as quickly as possible to Rome.

Notwithstanding the instructions from Rome to Michelangelo, it was obvious that if he waited for a supply of marble from the new quarries, it would be long before the front of San Lorenzo in Florence could be commenced.

Little progress had been made in quarrying at Serravezza since the quarries were first opened, and that the works for San Lorenzo might not be unreasonably delayed, whilst Michelangelo prepared to carry out the wishes of the Pope, he was under the necessity of again entering into contracts at Carrara with the proprietors of marble quarries there.

Thus he contracted with Matteo Cucarello and company on the sixth of March 1517 for two white marble columns each nineteen feet in height, the diameter at the base of each to be two feet six inches without the fillet, which was to be one inch more.

On the fourteenth of the same month, he also contracted with Leonardo Casoni to excavate a certain quantity of marble. The prices, sizes and quality are specified in the contracts with precision, and it is provided that besides blocks suitable for building purposes, there were to be two for statues from nine feet six inches to eleven feet three in height. As these were far too large for the monument of Julius, they must have been intended for San Lorenzo. No place is provided in the very poor design in the Academy at Florence, said to be that prepared by Michelangelo for statues of such proportions as this, and this, apart from its general demerits, increases the doubt with which it may be regarded.

Besides these Colossi, four blocks for other statues, each about eight feet in height, were contracted for; these proportions correspond so accurateley with those of the statues blocked out and now existing in a grotto of the Boboli gardens, whilst at the same time the action closely resembles that of figures representing garland bearers, slightly indicated over one of the wings, of the drawing preserved in the Buonarroti museum, as to render it highly probably that these or some of them are portions of Michelangelo's design for that church.

Notwithstanding the expressions of good will on the part of the Cardinal communicated through Buoninsegni, Michelangelo's enemies were ceaseless in their efforts to prejudice both the Pope and the Cardinal against him, of which he was duly informed by his friends in Rome, amongst whom Leonardo, the saddller, ne' Bargherini, wrote to advise him to hasten his work as much as possible, to which Michelangelo replied: « I would have you understand that such solicitations are to me so many stabs, for I die of vexation from not being able to do that which I would do, but for my evil fortune. »[1] This cry of anguish is expressive of what were the feelings of Michelangelo as to his enforced labours.

The same Leonardo informed him that the Cardinal was dissatisfied with him, as he had learnt from a distinguished Master that he was not working and never would work. So the artist of the Sixtine, the sculptor of the David and the Pietà, and so many other great works, was spoken of and judged.

This distinguished Master was Iacopo da Sansovino a defeated competitor for the front of San Lorenzo and a second rate artist, who thus expressed himself to Michelangelo on the thirtieth of June 1517: « The Pope and the Cardinal and Iacopo Salviati are men who, when they have said yes, it is a bond, so true

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

are they and not what you say. But you measure them with your measuring rod; for with you, neither contracts, nor faith are of value, and you say yes or no, as may be useful to yourself; know that the Pope promised me the reliefs and Iacopo Salviati also, and they are men who maintain their words: as for me, I have done for you as much as I could to be useful to you and for your honour, when I had not yet seen that you never did good to any one. »[1]

Thus was Michelangelo insulted by his rivals. What is to be thought of the Cardinal, with whom the statements of such a man as this could have any weight? It is needless to pause even for an instant to refute such slanders as these, or to defend Michelangelo from such misrepresentations of his noble and generous character.

That Michelangelo commissioned Baccio d'Agnolo to make a model from his design for the front of San Lorenzo, has been already referred to. On two occasions he visited Florence to see it, and when he went there to lay off the foundations of the new front which was to be built, he perceived that Baccio either could not or would not execute it. Domenico Buoninsegni having again written regarding the Pope's wish to see the model, Michelangelo went expressly to Florence at the end of August 1517, and himself superintended the preparation of a model in wood, the sculpture being represented in wax. The cost was defrayed by Michelangelo, but a carpenter's wages were paid by the Pope through Bernardo Niccolini. This model intended for the inspection of Pope must be distinguished from that made at Carrara.

Apparently it took some time to get it ready, for it was not forwarded to Rome till December in charge of Pietro D'Urbano, who by a letter of the twenty-ninth of the month informed

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

Michelangelo, that it had arrived safely, and was placed in the house of Buoninsegni where it was shewn to the Pope and the Cardinal, both of whom had been greatly pleased; at the same time he stated on the part of Buoninsegni that the Pope wished Michelangelo to visit him in Rome.

Domenico Buoninsegni wrote himself, saying that the model had arrived in perfect condition, and that the Pope and Cardinal were highly satisfied, and further informed the artist that he had heard no ill natured criticisms « except that it was said that the flanks [1] increased it so much, that you never will finish it in your life time; but in truth this is a small criticism, and if you will act by my advice, having need of men, you will select them from other people than ours, who are all such great masters in their own opinions. Apropos of such boasters, I would say to you that some years ago I was at Milan, where are many works of sculpture on the Cathedral there, and I saw good things and young men who are trained there and who would be proud to serve you. However, I do not know much about it, and you know a great deal, but what I recall is, that you may make a note of it. » [2]

In compliance with the wish of the Pope, Michelangelo went to Rome in January 1518, and made a new agreement with His Holiness, by the terms of which he undertook to erect the front by estimate, the Pope on his part binding himself to advance four thousand ducats. On the sixth of February, Michelangelo returned from Rome to Florence, whence he departed on the twenty-fifth for Carrara, where he found the inabitants prejudic-

[1] « The flanks. » This expression is remarkable. Both the design in the Florence Gallery and that in the Buonarroti Museum show lofty flanks hiding the aisles. It would be necessary to return these some distance parallel to the sides of the church, or their false character structurally would have been evident. Hence the criticism reported by Buoninsegni made not without justice.

[2] Buonarroti Archives. This letter to Michelangelo is quoted here, although its date is 1st January 1518.

ed against him, and that his contracts with the quarrymen had not been properly fulfilled, nor preparations made for embarking the blocks. He was consequently obliged to go to Genoa to hire vessels, but on the arrival of these at the beach near Carfara the masters were bribed by the Carrarese to break their contracts.

From Pietrasanta [1] on the second of April, he wrote an account of these transactions to his brother.

« Buonarroto. I wish thee to inform me if Iacopo Salviati has arranged with the Consuls of the wool Corporation according to the minute, as he promised me, and if he has not done it, beg him on my part to do it; and if thou seest that he does not do it, advise me that I may retire from this, because I have entered upon a thing to impoverish me, for it does not succeed as I anticipated. Notwithstanding, if promises are kept with, me, I will carry out the undertaking at whatever cost and annoyance, without any kind of security at present.

With regard to the question of the road here, say to Jacopo that I will do what I can for his magnificence, and that he never will be deceived in that which he confides to me, for I seek not my own advantage, but the advantage and honour of my employers and my country: and if I have requested the Pope and the Cardinal to give me authority over this road, I have done so that I. might direct it to those places, where the best marbles are, which every one does not know: I have not asked this for any gain, I think not of such things; indeed I beseech the magnificence of Iacopo that he will give it to do to Master Donato, for he is very skilful in such matters, and he is

[1] Pietrasanta and Serravezza are referred to indifferently, both are stations not far from each other from which penetration was easy into the gorges of the Appuan Alps, as the grand buttress of the Appennines formed by the marble mountains is called.

honest; and let him give to me authority to direct it and arrange it, as seems to me needful, for I know where the best marbles are, and where to make the best road to transport them, and how to improve for those who lay out money.

Therefore make known what I say to the said Iacopo and recommend me to his magnificence, and request him to recommend me to his men in Pisa, that they do me the favour to find vessels to take my marbles from Carrara. I have been at Genoa and I bought four vessels to the beach to load them, and the Carrarese corrupted the masters of the said boats, and so harassed me that I did nothing, and I think to go to Pisa to provide others. However recommend me as I have said, and write to me. »[1]

The second of April.

MICHELAGNIOLO
in Pietrasanta.

Arrange with Pietro to stay with me as if thou didst act for me, if necessary give him money, I will repay thee.

Having undertaken the front of San Lorenzo by estimate, it was evidently right that every facility should be given to Michelangelo with regard to the excavation and carriage of marble, and as by no fault of his own he had incurred the dislike of the Carrarese, the more needful was it that he sould have the control of the newly made road to the new quarries of Serravezza, and that he should extend it to those places, where the best marble was to be found.

On the seventh of April, he again writes to Buonarroto, this time from Pisa:

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

Buonarroto. I was eager, as I wrote to you, to carry away my marble, and arrived in Pisa. By the favour of Iacopo Salviati, I have hired two masters of vessels at a just price and I shall be served: Francesco Peri has done everything for me for the love of Iacopo. Let me beg of you to thank his magnificence for the great service which he has rendered me....

.... The road and everything I hope will go on well. I am about to leave and I go to Pietrasanta, and Francesco Peri gives me one hundred ducats which I carry to the Commissary of Pietrasanta for the road.»[1]

The seventh day of April (1518).

MICHELAGNIOLO
in Pisa.

On the eighteenth he again writes, and it is evident that his troubles were increased rather than modified.

« Buonarroto. I learn by yours that the agreement is not yet made: I am greatly vexed; I therefore send one of my men by post on this account alone: he is to remain all thursday to see if the agreement is made, and on friday he is to return here to inform me: and if it is made as I have requested, I shall carry out the enterprize; should it not be made on thursday, as you write to me, I shall not think therefore that Iacopo Salviati has not the will to make it, but that he cannot; and I shall get on horseback and shall go to the Cardinal de'Medici and the Pope, and shall explain my position to them, and shall abandon this undertaking and return to Carrara, to do which I am prayed to, as Christ is. The masons which I brought thence (from Florence) understand nothing either of quarries or marbles. They

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

have cost me one hundred and thirty ducats and have not yet excavated for me one splinter of marble that is good, and they go about making believe that they have made great discoveries, and they seek to work for the Cathedral and for others with the money which they have received from me. I dont know who favours this, but the Pope shall know everything; since I established myself here I have thrown away three hundred ducats, and I see nothing for my advantage. I have undertaken to bring the dead to life, to tame these mountains, to introduce trade into this country: should the wool corporation, give me beside the marble, one hundred ducats a month, to do that which I am doing, it would not do badly, besides making the agreement. Recommend me to Iacopo Salviati and write by my man how the affair goes, so that I may do what is needful, for I am racked by this uncertainty.

MICHELAGNIOLO
in Pietrasanta.

The boats which I hired at Pisa have not come; I believe that I have been beguiled: and so it is always. Oh a thousand times cursed be the day and the hour when I left Carrara! This is the reason of my ruin, but I shall return there soon. In these days it is a sin to do well. Remember me to Giovanni Ricasoli.[1]

This letter shows the state of mind to which Michelangelo was reduced by his appointment as quarryman and road maker at Pietrasanta. Fortunately for him the Consuls of the wool Corporation of Florence on the twenty-second of April 1518 determined that the execution of the road for the carriage of marble from the new quarries should be entrusted to him, giving him full authority to do whatever he might consider necessary and useful towards this object.

[1] British Museum Buonarroti MSS. n. 41.

Michelangelo's letters present a singular picture of the intrigues and dishonesty of the people whom he came in contact with, and above all of the difficulties which beset his path in the service of the Pope, and the absence of all protection or support in the performance of the duties which were forced upon him. The Pope was strong enough to oppress him, apparently too weak or too careless to protect him. Writing about his work, he has recorded that « at Serravezza, in the mountains of Pietrasanta on the territory of the Florentines, having there blocked out six columns of rather more than twenty two feet each and a great deal more marble, and made that progress in excavation now observable and which never was made before. »[1] At this time Michelangelo had a narrow escape from great personal danger, as he has himself described in a letter to his assistant Pietro d'Urbano.

« Pietro. Business has gone very badly. On saturday morning I set myself to lower a column with every care and nothing was wanting, but when it was lowered about ninety-five feet the ring of the lewis broke, and the column fell into the river in a hundred fragments. The ring had been ordered by Donato from his godfather Lazzaro Ferraro, and had it been of good quality it ought to have sufficed to uphold four columns, and when looked at externally there seemed to be no doubt of its strength, but where broken, we saw the great rascality of the maker; there was not as much iron in thickness as would have made the blade of a knife, it was wonderful that it resisted so long. All who were there were put in peril of their lives, and an admirable stone was broken.

This Carneval I left the charge of the iron work to Donato, who was to go to the forge and to select soft iron; thou seest how he has treated me, so that the lewis which he had made for

[1] British Museum Buonarroti MSS.

me split in the ring in lowering this column, and as they are twice as thick as usual, if of good iron they would have supported an infinite weight, but the iron is raw and bad, and worse could not be had: and this is what Donato has done with his godfather, sending him to the forge and serving me as thou seest; verily there is need of patience. »[1]

Michelangelo is seen superintending the removal of heavy weights, observing and criticising the apparatus used; strange and it may be said humiliating occupation for the great master, but he is acquiring practical knowledge in this rough school, he works earnestly and without complaint, saying only « verily there is need of patience. »

Iacopo Salviati wrote thus to him on hearing of the breakage of the column: « Have courage and follow bravely thine enterprize, for having begun it, thine honour is engaged; and trust to me that nothing shall be wanting, and our Lord is about to compensate thee fully[2] and do not doubt this: and if from me thou desirest any one thing more than another let me know, and thou shalt instantly be attended to. Reflect that having commenced a work of this nature, our city of Florence is under great obligation to thee, and will be permanently indebted to all of thine house. Great men in adversity rise above it and are courageous. »[3]

This letter shows clearly what was thought by a distinguished contemporary of the treatment of Michelangelo by Leo X; nor was Salviati alone in this opinion in which other friends of the great artist shared.

That the Carrarese should resent the opening of the quarries

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

[2] He probably alludes here to the intention of employing Michelangelo to design the chapel of the Medici and to sculpture the monuments which it contains. The letter therefore was written after the death of Lorenzo.

[3] Buonarroti Archives.

at Serravezza was natural, but they were in error in fixing the responsibility upon Michelangelo. He at first strenuously opposed the undertaking, which was fraught with nothing but vexation and dishonour to himself, as well as the disappointment of his most cherished feelings as to the occupation of his time.

That the owners of quarries and the working class should err in judgment was to be expected, but that an able and well disposed Prince, such as the Marchese of Massa, Antonio Alberico, should be induced to attack the character of Michelangelo is extraordinary. He wrote to the Pope: « That he had done as much honour to Michelangelo as was possible, and that this disposition had been of no service to him from his unhappy temper, at all times in discord with others, causing estrangements and that all was his fault. »[1] Michelangelo was informed of this by his friend Leonardo, the saddler, in November 1518. The effect of such attacks upon his sensitive mind may be imagined.

Michelangelo worked at intervals for the monument of Julius, as had been agreed upon with Pope Leo. He gives the following account of his proceedings at Florence: « Afterwards when I was at Florence for the said front of San Lorenzo, there being no marble for the tomb of Julius, I returned to Carrara and remained there thirteen months, and had all the marble necessary for the sepulchre taken to Florence, and I built a room to make it in and began to work. Aginensis sent Messer Palavicini, who is now Bishop of Aleria, to hasten me, and he saw the room and all the marbles and figures blocked out for the said sepulchre, which are still there. Seeing that I worked for the Tomb, Giulio de'Medici who was living in Florence and was afterwards Clement, did not allow me to go on. »[2]

What has become of the works thus described by Michelangelo? His contracts for marble with the proprietors of quarries for the

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

[2] Letter of Michelangelo published by Ciampi.

most part have been preserved, and when these are examined, the sizes of the blocks ordered for statues do not agree with those specified in the draft of his last contract of this period, neither does it appear that he remained at one time thirteen months at Carrara, but he may readily have computed differently from later writers, and may not have taken into account brief visits to Florence, such as that for laying off the foundations of the new front.

It has been already mentioned that he purchased a site for a house in Florence, on which to erect a Studio, and conveyed marble there from the great quantity collected at Avenza. It must have been this workshop with its contents which Palavicini saw and was satisfied with.

It has generally been supposed that the four statues in the grotto in the Boboli gardens were amongst those seen on the occasion of that inspection. It has already been pointed out that these were much more probably intended for the front of San Lorenzo, for they are too large and too unequal in height to have been suitable for the monument; the stride of one of them amounts to three feet seven inches, whereas the pedestals in front of the monument of Julius are little more than two feet wide. This statue therefore could not have been destined for one of these. Like the young men, garland bearers of the cornice of the Sixtine, possibly these statues were to be garland bearers on the cornice of San Lorenzo, and this suggestion explains their action and present state, especially the masses of marble adapted for cutting out not figures only, but figures bearing massive garlands.

Another group called Victory now in the national museum, has also been assigned to the all absorbing monument. But it is much too large. It is an unpleasant composition and rather represents brute force than victory. A young and very powerful man,

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STATUE OF DYING ADONIS

PLATE 8.

of a lithe and handsome form, the face especially is beautiful, crushes down one much older than himself; this last figure is thought to resemble the artist himself in its features.

If it does so, it is not inconsistent with the genius of Michelangelo to suppose that this unexplained work, bequeathed by him without a history, represents in a block of marble of Serravezza, his oppression there, and that its name is not victory but tyranny. It is an embodiment of cruel, savage and resistless force.

Close beside it in the same museum is the recumbent statue representing a dying Adonis also of Serravezza marble.

The design is so peculiar that it seems likely that this was not the original intention of the statue, but rather that it may have been one of the prostrate figures to be placed at the feet of a Victory on the tomb of Julius. This theory is not without its difficulties, but the figure so closely resembles one of those in Michelangelo's sketch, and as an Adonis is so awkward, that the suggestion may be admitted to deserve attention. When it is examined and its general merits are considered, it presents appearances of having been finished by a pupil, who metamorphosed it into a statue of the dying Adonis. The Boar cannot be Michelangelo's work. It was preserved in the Grand Ducal Villa of Poggio Imperiale, where it had been cleaned and an encaustic applied, as was at one time the usage, having a very conservative effect on the surface of marble.

The fact of this statue being of Serravezza marble may at first sight appear to be subversive of this surmise. But when Michelangelo was peacefully engaged at Rome on the monument, he ordered one block of this marble through Michele, which not arriving, he impatiently inquired for. He may have received it and blocked out a prostrate captive, for at that time the contract containing statues of captive provinces was still in force. If however he never worked in Serravezza marble, till he person-

ally directed the excavations of the new quarries, then this suggestion must necessarily fall to the ground.

The same Museum contains an ideal Bust of Brutus by Michelangelo, which he began to execute for the Cardinal Ridolfi but did not complete. It merits especial attention being certainly even in its unfinished state one of the finest busts produced in an age prolific in such works. In those parts of the face which are nearly finished, the softness of the flesh is rendered with unsurpassable skill, whilst the whole head, instinct with life, is of a noble and dignified character. The drapery on the shoulders is perfect in its arrangement; the folds bend in towards the centre of the chest in graceful curves and such is the delicacy of the execution that it suggests bronze rather than marble. A cast of this unfinished bust ought to be in every school of Art. On it is inscribed the following distich:

> Dum Bruto effigiem sculptor de marmore ducit
> In mentem sceleris venit et abstinuit.

The Earl of Sandwich with more justice thus wrote:

> Brutum effecisset sculptor; sed mente recursat
> Tanta viri virtus, sistit et abstinuit. [1]

The heads of the two figures, the Victory or Tyranny and the Adonis arrest the attention; both resemble in general type the head of Julian de' Medici as sculptured on his famous monument, and all three are equally ideal. An ideal which is observable in the head of the noble statue of St George by Donatello, whose great and original powers as a sculptor were cordially appreciated and admired by Michelangelo. There are figures on the two bronze pulpits in the Church of San Lorenzo, both by Donatello, which in their expression, action and vigorous character, anticipate the design of Michelangelo.

[1] From the catalogue of the Florence Gallery.

Although Michelangelo broke away from the sentiment and general manner of his predecessors, still artists of the most original powers retain to the last traces of the school in which they were trained.

Thus in his frescos careful comparison discovers reminiscenses of Domenico Ghirlandajo, and in his sculpture there is evidence of his early admiration of Donatello. The heads of the David, of the Adonis and of the Julian recall, more or less, that of the St George in feature, manner and in the arrangement of the hair.

It is profoundly interesting to contemplate the industry and energy of this great man, who tormented and ill used and oppressed with unusual labour, compelled to go backwards and forwards between Florence and the quarries, his attention distracted by the infinity of practical details which occupied it, still found time to work with his chisel, and did all that lay in his power to fufill his contracts, whether public or private.

Chapter XI

The termination of Michelangelo's charge of the excavation of marble and of road making at Serravezza was now near at hand. He was to be restored as he has himself stated to his freedom[1] and honourable commissions were to be assigned to him. The records which he has left relating to this unhappy period of his life are profoundly interesting. He wrote on the tenth of March 1520.[2]

« Be it known that I, Michelangelo, Florentine Sculptor, whilst at Carrara for marbles in 1516, for my works, by Commission of Pope Leo, to excavate marbles for the front of San Lorenzo of Florence, according to a design which I made for that work, afterwards on or about the eighth of January (1517), I had from Pope Leo one thousand broad ducats on account of the above by the hands of Iacopo Salviati paid to me in Car-

[1] His own expression is « e così mi lascia in mia libertà. »
[2] Buonarroti Archives.

rara by his servant called Bentivoglio. And about the twenty-fifth of February (1518), or more exact time,[1] I received from Pope Leo in Florence eight hundred ducats by the hands of Iacopo Salviati for the said working of marble for San Lorenzo, and not being able to make use of the said marble at Carrara I began to excavate in the mountains of Serravezza, Township of Pietrasanta where there never had been excavations before.

And on the twenty-sixth of March 1519 (1520) the Cardinal de' Medici caused to be paid to me on the above account five hundred ducats, which were paid to me by Gadi of Florence.»

Another document preserved at Berlin without date, but probably written at the same time, enters into the whole subject more fully and graphically, and the following extracts describe the termination of Michelangelo's work in the quarries.

« Afterwards at this time (apparently the 26th March 1520) the Cardinal (Giulio de'Medici) by commission of the Pope stopped my proceedings, saying that they wished to free me from this trouble of directing the excavation of marbles, and that they would provide for me in Florence,[2] and make a convention with me, and so it has been till now. Just at this time a certain number of masons from the office of works of the Cathedral at Florence, came to Pietrasanta or rather to Serravezza, to undertake the works and to take over the marbles which I had excavated for the front of San Lorenzo and to use them to make the pavement of Sta Maria del Fiore. Leo still wishing to prosecute the front of San Lorenzo, the Cardinal de' Medici thus disposed of the marbles of the said front to others, and not to me,[3] without coming to terms with me as to the works, of

[1] « Or more exact time » an expression by which Michelangelo denotes, then or about that time, he uses it frequently.

[2] To design and erect the Chapel of the Medici.

[3] Very singular proceedings on the part of the Cardinal.

which I complained, for neither the Cardinal, nor the office of works had any right to interfere in my affairs, before I had come to terms with the Pope.... After which and settlement of accounts with him they might have done what they pleased. »

After a statement of money transactions Michelangelo adds:

« I do not place to account the very great ignominy of having employed me to do this work and of taking it from me, for what reason I do not yet know. Nor do I add to the account my house in Rome which I left, nor the loss of more than five hundred ducats worth of marble, of furniture and work. Without reference to these items there remain to me five hundred and fifty ducats of the two thousand three hundred which I have received.

Now we are agreed. Pope Leo takes over the works done and the marbles which I have in hand, and I am set free, and I am advised to make a deed, which the Pope will sign. »[1]

And so ended the four years of compulsory employment in which to use Michelangelo's bitter words, so much « ignominy » had been thrust upon him, and during which he had manifested so much ability and so much zeal, and performed such true and loyal service. He had been deprived, in a sense robbed of his property, his labours on the monument of Julius had been arrested when he was about to add the last touches of his inspired chisel to three of the finest of his works, the statue of Moses and those of the Captives, that he might make roads and quarry columns and blocks for statues and for building. And at last

[1] Michelangelo was to retain the balance in hand, the wholly inadequate payment of 500 ducats.

The document from which the above extracts have been made, is published by Hermann Grimm in his interesting life of Michelangelo.

in a tricky discreditable way, his work was stopped, the marbles appropriated to other and meaner purposes without his consent, and his conscientious studies and labour in preparation for erecting an edifice which he hoped to make « the mirror of Architecture » rendered nugatory without explanation, for he distinctly says, he did not know why.

And so he left the quarries and returned to Florence to resume his work upon the monument of Julius, and the statue of Christ triumphant over death, for the church of Sta Maria sopra Minerva, in Rome, which he completed in 1521.

Shortly after the dissolution of his contract for the front of San Lorenzo, Michelangelo was informed of the early death of Raffael da Urbino in the following terms by Sebastian del Piombo. That sad event having taken place on the sixth of April.

12th April 1520.

« I believe that you have heard that poor Raffaello da Urbino is dead, [1] and I feel that this must have caused you much sorrow, may God give him his pardon. »

It may well be believed that this unexpected loss must have grieved Michelangelo. Raffael had been heard to thank God that he had lived at a time when he could study his works, but the evil influences of others, especially the counsels of Bramante, kept the two great men apart, and Michelangelo deeply resented the attempted interference with his commission in the Sixtine, which he was afterwards induced to believe was shared in by Raffael, although the active agent was Bramante. He admired the genius of Raffael, the more that he thought that that great master followed in his footsteps. He undoubtedly

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

overestimated the effect of his example, but his opinion was shared by Julius as well as by others of his contemporaries.[1]

It appears that after the death of Raffael, Leo made offers to Michelangelo through Sebastian del Piombo to paint the Hall of Constantine as it is now called, but Raffael's pupils were in possession of his designs and had actually begun to work, and Michelangelo resisted all attempts to induce him to interrupt their proceedings. The Pupils were anxious to paint the designs in oil instead of in fresco. Sebastian del Piombo writing in his usual way to Michelangelo informs him, that he had taken his letter to the Cardinal Dovizza da Bibbiena, who had told him, « That the Pope had given the hall of the Pontiffs (as it was then called) to the Pupils of Raffael, and that they had executed a specimen of a figure in oil on the wall which was a beautiful work of art, so much so that no one would now look at the rooms painted (in fresco) by Raffael, that this hall would excel the others and would be the finest work executed in painting since the time of the ancients. »[2] At first sight this statement of the Cardinal may seem extravagant, but the figure spoken of was designed by Raffael, and such is its excellence, that it has hitherto been believed to have been also painted by him. Sebastian does not state, which of the three figures in oil colours now in the Hall of Constantine he here alludes to. Painted in oil as an experiment, it must have seemed more brilliant than the pictures in fresco in the Stanze, in one at least of which — The Heliodorus — there is evidence of Raffael's dissatisfaction with pure fresco, and of his wish by a subsequent process of retouching to attain

[1] « All the discords which arose between Julius and me were caused by the envy of Bramante and Raffael of Urbino, and this was the reason why he did not continue his monument during his life, for my ruin; and truly Raffael had reason, seeing that what he had of art, he had from me. » Letter of Michelangelo by Sebastian Ciampi p. 7.

This last statement of Michelangelo is so prejudiced and extravagant that it suggests a hope that the first also may not be true. He did not appear to suspect Raffael when he complained of Bramante to Julius.

[2] Buonarroti Archives.

greater depth and richness of chiaroscuro and of colour. His pupils then were induced by his example to try a method capable of attaining these objects, and they had recourse to oil painting. Sebastian had before this time shown his preference for this system in the Church of San Pietro in Montorio, and the Cardinal's admiration was a testimony in favour of his principles. Their adoption by the pupils of Raffael makes him for the moment fair to them and he relates their success in glowing terms.

Neither Sebastian nor the pupils were aware that mural oil pictures would darken so much as is actually the case, but apart from this, if their condition is contrasted with fresco paintings generally, they are found to be much better preserved. It is quite evident that Raffael and other great Masters were dissatisfied with the imperfect process of fresco painting, [1] and it may be regretted that this fact was some years since overlooked in England, when attempts were made to introduce a system unsuited to the genius and instincts of English artists and to the nature of the climate. The mural oil paintings in the Vatican show the superior durability of the process, and by careful modifications and attention to chemical conditions, the superabundant darkening might no doubt be avoided. The conditions which lead to this effect are perfectly well known, and there are innumerable specimens of oil painting in Italy executed in the sixteenth century, which are as clear now as when first painted; amongst which is Michelangelo's picture for Angelo Doni.

Sebastian, strangely enough, added to his gossip a statement made to him by Baccino di Michelangelo, [2] that the Pope was not satisfied with the trial work of the pupils; were this true, the taste of Leo might well be questioned. But it is probably untrue.

[1] See Report on the Frescos of the old Masters by C. H. Wilson published by the Royal commission on the fine Arts. London 1843, p. 28.

[2] Baccio Bandinelli.

Michelangelo made no reply to this letter, and on the sixth of December, Sebastian wrote to him again, urgently beseeching him at least to express his opinion, telling him at the same time that the Pope had sent to inquire if he had received a reply, and when informed that there was none, he had been offered in the name of the Pope a commission to paint the Hall beneath, leaving that above exclusively to the pupils of Raffael. The letter continues: « I replied that I could not accept any thing without your knowledge, or till your answer reached me, and that none had come up to this time, and I also said to him that even if he were not engaged to Michelangelo, and that the Pope desired that I should do this hall, I would not do it, because I do not think myself inferior to the pupils of Raffael da Urbino, especially as you had been offered the half of the hall above by the mouth of the Pope, and it did not seem to me an honest proposal that I should paint the cellars and they the gilt chambers, so I said, let them paint them. He answered that the Pope made the proposal to escape disputes, that the pupils had the designs ready for the hall above, and that below was as much as the other the Pontiff's. I said that I would do nothing. They laugh at me and my doings, and I am so disconcerted that I am like a madman. »

He again entreats Michelangelo to undertake to paint the hall and to take it out of the hands of Raffael's pupils. « There can be no more important work than this in the world; by it you may avenge yourself of all the insults offered to you, and silence all the idle talk for ever, for in this hall you will have for subjects noble events in history. The first will be the Story of the Emperor Constantine, when there appeared to him a brilliant cross, the sign of his approaching victory, and the death of a certain king his rival. Next on the largest space a battle or feat of arms, which they say is that which the Pope wishes to be first begun.

On the third space a presentation of prisoners to the Emperor, and on the fourth the preparation for the bath of blood of infants in which to bathe Emperor Constantine, in which picture are introduced many women and children and the executioners to kill them. These are the subjects the Pope told me[1] that they wished to represent, and for which they had designs by Raffael. I answered him, as I wrote to you before, that in my opinion there could be no better lessons on history or better chosen. I beg of you my friend, for the sake of the love that is between us to answer me, that I may know what I have to do, for I am censured by all and chiefly by the Pope, because I do not know what reply to offer, for this concerns your honour as it does mine. »[2]

27th October 1520.

Sebastian is consistent only in his jealousy of Raffael, a feeling which survived even the death of that great artist. His letters, instead of making out a case against the pupils are in reality in favour of their being allowed to finish the work, which he admits that they had begun so well. The suggestion to Michelangelo to prevent them doing so, was discreditable. His statement that Leo, Raffael being dead, distrusted the pupils and was prepared to employ Michelangelo to complete this the last of the Stanze, is remarkable. It has been thought that Michelangelo refused because of his treatment by the Pope as to the front of San Lorenzo, and he would have been quite justified had this been his motive, but better reasons may have influenced him, more in harmony with the nobility of his character. To have

[1] As Sebastian inacurately describes the other subjects, it may well be believed that he libels Leo or whoever selected those to be painted on these walls. The actual subject is a very fitting one, the baptism of Constantine, and not the brutal one mentioned by Sebastian.

[2] Buonarroti Archives.

prevented the pupils doing honour to their master's memory by painting his designs, would have been to imitate the conduct of which he had bitterly complained, that is, the attempt to prevent him finishing the vault of the Sixtine. He could not consistently have interfered as proposed, especially as Raffael's designs and Cartoons were complete, and the mural paintings commenced by his followers. The letter of Sebastian is further important, for it shows that the noble figures painted in oil on the walls of the Hall of Constantine were executed by the pupils of Raffael, and not by his own hands, as has been so generally believed.

Upon receiving Michelangelo's decided refusal, Sebastian replied that he regretted having written to him on the subject, and it appears from his letter that the pupils were at work. It is evident from this correspondence, that del Piombo was in reality afraid to match himself unaided with the pupils. He was an indifferent designer and draughtsman, but the excellence of his method of painting and of his colour, learnt in the school of Giorgione, when combined with the design of Michelangelo, who countenanced and aided him on various occasions, so established his reputation, that on the death of Raffael he was considered his successor. After the refusal of Michelangelo to assist him on this important occasion, he abandoned his opposition, and trusted for reputation and employment to his powers as a portrait painter. He appears to have been without generosity of temperament, was jealous, prejudiced and frequently untruthful. It is surprising that Michelangelo should have tolerated his manner of speaking and writing of Raffael. If in professional rivalry he assisted him with designs to enable him to compete on equal terms, it was in accordance with ideas then prevalent, nor are they without parallel in more modern times, but the language in which he expressed himself of his great rival and superior was intolerable and contemptible.

In 1519, before Michelangelo left the quarries of Serravezza, Leo X gave orders for the erection of the now famous chapel of the Medici adjoining the church of San Lorenzo. That it was his intention to employ Michelangelo as architect and sculptor of this commemorative building is apparent in the letter of Iacopo Salviati, written after the fall and breakage of the column, when Michelangelo was exposed to peril, which may have induced the Pope and his advisers to consider, whether it was justifiable to place so valuable a life in daily jeopardy from the casualties of the rude labour, which they had chosen him to superintend. The letter of Salviati undoubtedly shows that the event had affected his mind seriously, and it probably reflects what may justly have occurred to others also, and awakened them to a sense of their responsibilities.

Leo had been in his youth a Canon of San Lorenzo, and subsequently to his election to the Papacy, he bestowed high privileges on that church and gave it the title of Papal. After his interview at Bologna with Francis I, he returned to Florence, his brother Giuliano being very ill. That he might not see him die however, he left for Rome in February 1516.[1] His nephew Lorenzo Duke of Urbino to whom he was also warmly attached, died on the 4th of May 1519, and Leo in this year determined upon the erection of monuments to the memories of his brother and nephew, both to be placed in an edifice to be built expressly for them, on a space on the north side of the family church of San Lorenzo.

Vasari speaks of the period of Michelangelo's life, when he returned from the quarries, as one of loss of time and of trifling occupations, such as the windows and copper blinds of the Medici palace. He omits to mention other and more important works then in progress; the statues for the monument of Julius,

[1] He died on the 17th of March following.

and that of Christ, which is now in the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, for which it was destined by Metello Varj.

Michelangelo in October 1520 wrote to Sebastiano del Piombo to obtain a brief from the Pope, granting him permission to visit Rome. The Cardinal Aginensis had just died, it was suspected by unfair means, but the Pope thought it prudent under the circumstances to decline granting the required permission, saying that he did not wish the work then going on at Florence to be interrupted, work which he had so unscrupulously arrested at other times.

Sebastian however advised Michelangelo to come to Rome notwithstanding, that he might attend to his interests, for the Cardinal dying suddenly had left his affairs unsettled.

Rome, 9th November 1520.

« It would be well on your part to come and look after the business of the monument, and still more, after important matters that you know of, especially of a certain castle of Canossa which Master Zovanni has talked with me about, a famous subject to set your brain on fire. So that if you were in Rome you might settle everything. You would then obtain all that you could wish, not castles only, but cities, for I know how highly the Pope esteems you; when he speaks of you, it appears as if he were talking of a brother, almost with tears in his eyes: for he has told me how you were brought up together, and shows that he understands and loves you, but that you are terrible to every one, even to Popes. »[1]

These last words wounded Michelangelo who complained of them in reply, and received for answer the unmeaning phrase

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

« that he only appeared terrible in his art, that he was the greatest master who ever lived. »[1] The allusion to « a certain castle of Canossa » is curious, and looks like a bait thrown out to Michelangelo, who so highly esteemed his supposed connection with this ancient and noble race. It may be that it means, that he might obtain possession of a Castle of Canossa.

The manner in which the Pope's regard for Michelangelo is spoken of in such expressive terms, contrasts singularly with the great artist's banishment from the Pontifical court by his employment in the marble quarries of the Lunigiana.

It is difficult to reconcile the terms of the letter with that banishment. It recalls the excess of regard which induced Leo to fly from the death bed of his favourite brother. He was full of romantic sentiment, if not of robust affection. The closing sentence of Sebastian's letter which aroused the susceptibility of Michelangelo, indicates an intention on the part of Leo to attribute to his demeanour his estrangement from the papal court. The remark is not without justice. Michelangelo's genius could not be on every occasion an excuse for his eccentricity. He allowed himself to be carried away by passion, especially if his self love was wounded, and he at times used language which nothing could justify, without the slightest regard for the merits or station of the person, whom he addressed. This appears to have been the case from an early age, and his broken nose was a lesson which unhappily did not influence his future conduct. His sayings to Julius on various occasions justified the remark of Leo that he repelled even Popes. A lofty independence of character on his part might have been supported without incivility, an upright judgment of the merits of others, without arrogance.[2] The rough replies which he received he brought upon

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

[2] Pope Clement who understood him, used at their interviews to tell him to be seated and to put his hat on, knowing that if he did not say so Michelangelo would do both.

himself, and the warmth with which Julius reproved him, and expressed his displeasure was undoubtedly justified upon several occasions, if not always by the demeanour and words of the intemperate artist. That he pressed Michelangelo unreasonably in his work is certain and his conduct in their business relations to each other was mean and arbitrary, but this hardly justified conduct so unbecoming as that of Michelangelo's on various occasions, or his forgetfulness of the respect due to the high station and age of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Leo, of a very different disposition from his predecessor, was evidently unwilling to encounter the discourtesies of his schoolfellow. He owed it to his high position to avoid even the possibility of forgetfulness of respect, and the strange scenes which took place in the presence of Julius, when artists gave each other the lie, and a Prelate could be turned out with cuffs, justified caution in the conduct of his successor. The court of Leo was no place for such scenes, and the courteous, dignified, amiable bearing of Raffael was more suited to it and its head, than the irascibility of his great rival, whose habits also must have placed him at a disadvantage, more especially when the tastes of the Pope encouraged splendour of dress and adornment, to which the penurious customs and shabby exterior of Michelangelo were in such contrast. No fault of demeanour on the great artist's part can however extenuate the conduct of Leo, nor justify the employment of his time in the marble mountains. The Cardinal Giulio de'Medici although he appears disadvantageously in the transactions connected with the quarries, having taken a share in promoting Michelangelo's compulsory employment, otherwise befriended him, and on the part of the Pope conferred upon him the commission to execute the Chapel of San Lorenzo and the monuments of the Medici towards the close of 1520.

On the twenty-ninth of the month of November of that year Michelangelo transmitted to the Cardinal his first design, which although it was highly approved of, was subsequently considerably varied in the execution as may be seen by the following letter.

« Spectabilis Vir amice noster charissime. We reply briefly to yours of the twenty-third, that we have the design or sketch of the chapel, and truly are pleased with it; the manner in which you have thought of placing the four sepulcres in the middle of the chapel pleases us, and if the sarcophagi of the sepulchres can be kept at most to three braccia in length (five feet nine inches) we think that they will turn out well, executing thereafter the other ornaments, which will complete the whole in that manner which you know will look well. But a difficulty presents itself to my mind, I do not see how in four braccia (seven feet and an inch) on every side, shown by you, the said sepulchres with their ornaments can be included, so that there shall remain eight braccia free on every side of the chapel! [1] However we are disposed to leave it to you to do what you think will be well and that as regards the chapel the arrangement which you make and the design will give satisfaction. Therefore you will go on and continue this work which we greatly recommend to you. And as to the ornaments and other details, there will be time enough to speak of these when we shall be in Florence. Bene valete. »

At the Malliana 28th November 1520.

Vester

JULIUS
Vicecancellarius. [2]

[1] Probably this sketch like others by Michelangelo was not drawn to scale and the practical Cardinal discovered an error, to which he drew the Architect's attention.

[2] Buonarroti Archives.

Some months elapsed before practical effect was given to the instructions of the Cardinal. No doubt in that time the artist thought out and prepared his design for the Chapel and monuments, and he was also partly occupied completing the statue of Christ for Metello Varj.

In April 1521 Michelangelo received from the Cardinal two hundred ducats to go to Carrara — there is no talk of Serravezza, — to give order for marble for the monuments of the Medici, when he remained twenty days as recorded by himself in a note bearing date the sixteenth and nineteenth of August 1521. « On the ninth of April one thousand five hundred and twenty-one, I had from the Cardinal de'Medici and through him by Domenico Boninsegni two hundred ducats to go to Carrara and to commission marbles for the sepulchres to be placed in the new Sacristy of San Lorenzo. I went to Carrara and staid there for about twenty days, and I there made all the measures and ground plans of the sepulchres drawn upon paper, [1] and I commissioned the marbles in separate portions from two companies.... I went to Carrara with a servant on foot called poor John, and I remained nine days. » [2] Thus two journeys are referred to as taking place at this time and they are the last of which there is any record. Michelangelo commenced these journeys in April 1505. He made at least ten different visits between that year and 1521 when on the 29th of April he saw Carrara and its quarries for the last time.

The servant « poor John » was a certain Scipio, a mason of Settignano, and it appears from another memorandum that on the 10th of April Michelangelo paid « ten ducats on account of his salary, which began on that day, to remain at Carrara to

[1] This is further proof of the practical architectural nature of Michelangelo's studies and proceedings at Carrara.

[2] Buonarroti Archives.

excavate marble on account of the Cardinal de'Medici for the sepulchres of San Lorenzo.» [1] When about to leave, Michelangelo advanced one hundred ducats in gold to one of the above mentioned Companies for a certain quantity of marble estimated at about two hundred loads, [2] taken from the quarry of Polvaccio (still the best quarry of Carrara marble) which were to be forwarded by boat at the end of eighteen months from that time, and the contractors bound themselves to provide the « said quantity in the time specified and especially to make three figures of the said marble and more if they could do so; and of squared marble, [3] as much as they could between this date and the end of July.» On the following day that is on the 23d April, he advanced fifty ducats in gold to the other Company, for another hundred loads of marble which were to be ready in a year «and especially to make from the said marble a figure of our Lady sitting, according to Michelangelo's design and other figures besides, if possible, betwen this time and the end of next July.» The contracts thus briefly recapitulated refer exclusively to the preparations for the sepulchres of the Medici and the statue of the Madonna in the Chapel of San Lorenzo, and have a special interest, as they explain the nature of the preparatory steps which Michelangelo required upon the part of the contractors, the description of the drawings which he provided, and that he placed sufficient confidence in the contractors to leave the blocking out of the figures in their hands, without his personal superintendence.[4]

[1] Vasari, V. XII, p. 358.

[2] Or tons.

[3] That is marble for building.

[4] On examination it will be found that the marble employed for all the architectural portions of the monuments of the Medici are from the old and celebrated quarry of Polvaccio in the Carrara mountains. A quarry first opened by the ancient Romans and from which it is said by judges of the quality of marbles, that the column of Trajan in the Forum of Trajan Rome, was formed.

I have been indebted to Signor Bondi of Florence for a practical judgment of the

It was in the spring season then of 1521, that Michelangelo ordered the excavation of the marble for his celebrated works the monuments of Giuliano and Lorenzo, including some of the statues, and that of the Madonna and child (which has never been completed), and which is now in the same Chapel placed between a figure of San Cosimo by Fra G. Angiolo Montorsoli, and another of San Damiano by Raffaello da Montelupo.

It appears on examination that all the statues of the monuments are not of the same marble. Michelangelo was unwisely interfered with, by inconsiderate and incapable officials who provided him with marble without consulting him as to its quality and fitness, of which he justly complained.

The great sculptor again returned to Florence and resumed his work upon the Christ commissioned years before in Rome by his friend Metello Varj. In harmony with his contract he commenced the statue in Rome, but when some progress had been made, a bad mark was discovered in the face, and he at once sacrificed the marble and labour expended upon it and resolved to commence it over again from another block. Circumstances prevented his doing so in Rome before he left that city in 1516 for Carrara, and after his engagement as architect of San Lorenzo, and his occupation in the quarries of Serravezza, he can have had little time to devote to it, but it was not forgotten. Amongst the blocks of marble, which from time to time he transmitted to Florence to his new studio, there must have been one destined for this statue, to which he devoted a part of his time so soon as his contract for the front of San Lorenzo was dissolved, when he returned to Florence.

That its progress was interrupted by the events related, must have been the case; but after his visit to Carrara and arrange-

marbles used by Michelangelo in his works at Florence. As Signor Bondi is a sculptor and deals in marble, he is a good judge of all the qualities.

ments there for the supply of marble, he could again dispose of his time and he carried it onwards towards completion between April 1521 and the following August. It was then sent to Rome under the charge of his servant and pupil Pietro d'Urbino, for whom Michelangelo entertained a special regard, and considered to possess a fair amount of ability.

But Pietro however good a workman when employed under his great master's direction, soon showed how little he was capable of working, when left to himself. Parts of the statue which, if entirely finished, might have been injured in the packing or transport, such as the extremities and the hair, were to be completed in Rome by Pietro from his master's drawings. What he really did under these circumstances is described by Sebastian del Piombo in a letter dated Rome the sixth of September and directed to Michelangelo, who must have read it with no little vexation:

« But I must give you to understand, that all that he has worked upon is disfigured, especially he has done the right foot in such a manner that it is manifest that the toes are sliced off, he has also shortened the fingers of the hands, especially that which holds the cross, which is the right, so that Frizzi says that they look as if they had been wrought by those who make dolls, and they do not appear to be of marble but rather to be made of paste, they are so stiff: and this I see, who do not understand working in marble; but this I say, that to me the fingers seem much shortened, and I may also say that it is obvious that he has so executed the beard, that I believe my boy would have shown more discretion, for it looks as if he had tried to finish it with a knife with a blunted point, but this may easily be remedied. » He then goes on to say that, as Michelangelo had written to him, he had come to an understanding with

the sculptor Frizzi to undertake the work instead of Urbino, and that Metello Varj was satisfied, that it should be so and with the selection of the artist.

« I believe » he adds « that Frizzi will serve you with all regard, he appears to me to be a good man, and I have besought him to touch the figure as little as need be, and we have agreed to lower it almost a palm. »[1]

Sebastian then goes on to describe the evil courses into which Urbino had fallen in Rome, overcome by temptations and an utter forgetfulness of the trust reposed in him.

On the nineteenth of October of the same year Frizzi had completed his undertaking, and placed the statue in the position which it was to occupy, which was not that desired, nor in a good light. It was set up in front of one of the pilasters of the chancel arch where it is now, and as Urbino in conformity with his reckless conduct gave a wrong measurement « the feet of the statue were so placed as to be on a level with the eye » this and Sebastian's previous remark are unintelligible. Perhaps the level of the statue has since been altered.

On the nineteenth of October, Frizzi himself wrote: « I have by your letter and by others from you that you wish to know what you have to give me for the work of finishing that little which was wanting in the statue. There was so little to do that I am ashamed to ask any reward, however not to seem obstinate I will tell you — although against my will — that when you have given me four ducats I am overpaid. »[2]

Of the sculptor Frizzi nothing further is known, but he appears very favourably in his letter to Michelangelo and in his

[1] [2] Buonarroti Archives.

successful repair of the disfigurement of the statue by Urbino. He was evidently esteemed a good artist by del Piombo, but whence he came or out of what school there is no record, and his only work of which there is any notice is a small monument at Bologna, made it is not known for whom. Michelangelo who entertained a great regard for Metello Varj being apprehensive that notwithstanding the care with which Frizzi had repaired the statue he might not feel satisfied, wrote to him and offered to do it over again. Varj replied that he was greatly obliged and that his offer was a proof of his much valued friendship « showing » he writes « your great mind and generosity that you wish to do over again a work than which there can be no better in the world and which is without its equal. »[1] In token of his friendship he presented the artist with a horse. He had also consulted him about another statue which he wished to place in the court of his house, and Michelangelo asked for the measurement and that it might be left to him, but the generous offer implied, Varj declined « not wishing to take advantage of him and being entirely satisfied with the statue which it was an honour to possess as if it were of gold, and all sufficient to show the generosity of Michelangelo, who had served him for love and not for money, doing it over again when marks appeared in the marble for the first; » a fact Varj adds « which ought to silence evil tongues which have spoken of you and me regarding this work. »[2]

This statue considered as a work of expression and of religious art, is in both respects without a parallel in its irreverence. It is impossible to do otherwise than to shrink with pained feelings from a figure of the Saviour represented without covering of any kind. The letter of Varj estimated from the same view

[1] Buonarroti Archives. Letter of Metello Varj 18th November 1521.
[2] Buonarroti Archives.

is a strong testimony to the depraved taste and debased religion prevalent, when such a statue of Christ triumphant over death could be imagined or tolerated.

If it can be forgotten whom the statue represents its value as a work of art may then be fully estimated. It is a noble embodiment of manly beauty and grace. As a St Sebastian, with the exception of its utter nudity, it would have been perfect. A noble figure of early manhood with a look of glowing triumph on the face it might have been brought within the pale of christian art as that Saint or some other youthful martyr. But considered as a statue of the Saviour, with all His sacred associations, its excellence as a work of art is forgotten in the surprise and pain with which it is necessarily looked on by every reverent mind.

Sebastian del Piombo must be in error as to the hands, if injured by Pietro d' Urbino, in the manner which he describes, nothing could have restored them to their actual and perfect proportions. The right foot has evidently been damaged, it is short and inferior to the left. The hair of the beard, which from the letter, must be assumed to be Frizzi's work does him great credit. It has not the boldness of locks sculptured by Michelangelo but it is carefully and gracefully executed.

This statue is now consigned to darkness. Santa Maria sopra Minerva has been restored at a great expense, with extraordinary magnificence and with almost incredibly bad taste. The windows have been filled with painted glass which has so darkened the church, that Michelangelo's Christ the marble of which is now much discoloured, appears as a black mass. An execrable brass drapery round the middle of the figure, and a brass shoe on the right foot complete the absurdity of its position and appearance. But with the exception of artists, the Italians are not troubled with taste, and the clergy especially set its laws at defiance.

It may be a relief to turn from this work of art to note the liberality and generosity with which Michelangelo gave designs to artists of all classes who applied to him for help. The following is a specimen of the nature of the applications made to him which it appears that he was generally disposed to listen to with favour, even when circumstances prevented his compliance. In 1521 Valerio Belli a gem cutter having a fine cornelian besought the master to give him a design, that he might produce a work which would do him honour. Artists of reputation were glad to avail themselves of his counsels and to carry out his designs.

This year was marked by an event in the private life of the great artist which recalls his friendship for the Syndic Piero Soderini. His nephew Niccolò Soderini requested him to accept the office of godfather to his son, which Michelangelo willingly consented to, that he might show his regard for a family towards whom he thus became further bound by ties of a sacred character.

On the first of December 1521 Leo the X died suddenly, when his ambitious policy was crowned with success, and when he had apparently touched the apex of his fortunes. The refinement and splendour of his court, promoted by his personal tastes and high cultivation, and the excellence of many of the works of art produced during his pontificate, together with his patronage of literature, have given him a reputation beyond his real deserts. The treatment of Michelangelo forms a dark chapter in the history of a Pontiff whose name has been transmitted to posterity as an enlightened encourager of the fine arts, and has been given to the age instead of that of Julius, as the name of his countryman Vespucci was bestowed on the new world instead of that of Columbus, and with equal justice.

He arrested the progress of Michelangelo's greatest work of sculpture, and compelled him to excavate blocks of marble from

mountain sides, which if cut under the direction of the usual and fitting agents, might have been carved into works of art by the great sculptor. He reversed the order of things by making Michelangelo a quarryman, and in preventing the execution of the monument of Julius, he was influenced by selfish motives, shared in by his relative and successor Clement.

Leo was succeeded by Adrian of Utrecht who as Pope retained his own name. He had been tutor of Charles V, and was distinguished for the purity of his morals and his profoundly religious character, in these attributes he was utterly unlike his predecessor. He was not without love of art, but he preferred that of Flemish origin. He also valued erudition. On his unexpected elevation it was neither art nor literature to which he devoted even a portion of his attention, but the promotion of religion and the reformation of morals.

Artists saw in his election the withdrawal of employment and the decline of their fortunes, and with them the new Pontiff was as unpopular, as infinitely to his honour he was with the followers of the Papal court, upon whom he sought to enforce the practice of virtue and the observance of religious duty.

Michelangelo readily found consolation, for he resumed the interrupted work on the monument of Julius.

Towards the close of Adrian's brief reign, he was invited to revisit Bologna under interesting circumstances. It was at this time intended to complete the front of the great Gothic church of San Petronio, and architects had in the usual manner been invited to make designs, amongst whom Baldassarre Peruzzi had made two of which one was in the style of the church and the other in the revived classic manner. A serious difference of opinion arose, and the officersof the works resolved to appeal to Michelangelo to visit Bologna to assist them with his judgment. They offered to pay his expenses and a generous honorarium

He did not however make this visit. Had he done so there can be no doubt that he would have decided against a medieval design. The front was not executed and remains unfinished now, and any capacity to design a medieval front remains to this day as invincible a problem to Italian architects as in the age of Michelangelo.

Chapter XII

Cardinal Giulio de' Medici was elected Pope on the 18th of November 1523, and took the name of Clement to demonstrate to all, it is said, his desire to practice the virtue of clemency in his government of the Church and of the State. Under Leo and Adrian he had manifested great administrative ability and he commenced his reign with prudence, whilst his personal conduct was marked by conciliation and the discharge of his duties, whether as Pontiff or Prince, in a manner indicative of his wish to win respect and confidence. In his treatment of science, literature and art he was not wanting in the traditional culture and tastes of his family, and he especially distinguished Michelangelo by his favour, he recalled their early friendship, he admired his genius, apprehended and esteemed his character and was not deterred by his faults of demeanour or temper from offering him honourable employment and adequate remuneration; his whole conduct towards the mighty artist is marked by consideration, indulgence and a desire to win his

regard and if possible to make him happy and contented in his work, all which shows how entirely he understood his peculiarities and valued his ability.

A few days after the election of Clement, Michelangelo gave expression not only to his own hopes, but to those of artists generally, when he wrote the following sentence in a letter to a marble cutter at Carrara, Domenico called Topolino: « You have heard how Medici is made Pope, at which I think all the world rejoices and whence I think that here many things will be done for art: » the letter is dated the 25th November 1523. Michelangelo's anticipations, thus promptly expressed, were soon realized. Shortly after his election the Pope contemplating in the spirit of the age and according to the usage of his family, the erection during his reign of important works and the continuation of others commenced under his cousin Leo, appears to have thought how he could best secure the services of the Master spirit Michelangelo. It is evident that he was hostile to the continuation of the monument of Julius and determined to employ the great artist on commemorations of the Medici rather than of the Della Rovere, and a plan presented itself to his mind, which if successful would insure the absolute obedience of a man of genius, who had so frequently manifested his insubordination to his predecessors. He proposed that Michelangelo should bind himself not to marry and should take orders, but this he refused to do. On the 13th of January 1524 Giovanni Francesco Fattucci addressed to him an affectionate letter on the subject of a proposed stipend. He had been the means of suggesting to him on the part of the Pope the desirableness of his taking orders, « as many worthy men have done, » but Michelangelo was not to be persuaded to this step. Fattucci's next letter says:

« Meanwhile think that all those things which you desire now or may desire, not one of them should be wanting. It need not have annoyed or surprised you, if I wrote to you of wife — or of minor orders — for I hope to act in such a manner, that when it pleases God that you shall not be able to work whether from old age or infirmity, you should always be independent as long as you live, nor have I shown your dejected letter in as much as you condescend to ask fifteen ducats a month, which is too bad; not even Pietro Gondi in proposing twenty-five, threw his ball far enough. Messer Iacopo (Salviati) has given orders that it should be written to Spina to pay you a monthly provision of fifty ducats, and all that you may order for the expense of the work, and Messer Iacopo has said, that you give instructions that an account be kept by whomsoever you may choose, of all the expenses which you incur in the said work, and know that for the Library which is to be made, or Façade, or other work at the expense of our Lord, he desires that all should pass through your hands. At the same time I say to you on my own part, good luck to you with your fifty ducats a month, which I hope will soon be the pension which you are to have increased to one hundred ducats a month, or perhaps more, if it please God. To day Messer Iacopo said to me, that in everything they wish to satisfy you. »[1]

It is evident from this letter that Michelangelo declined to take orders. It is to be presumed that had he done so he would no longer have been his own master even to the small extent of independence hitherto possible, his vows of obedience and his pension would have placed him absolutely under the control of the supreme Pontiff, to an extent little in harmony with his disposition and character. The monthly allowance was then

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

proposed apart from the question of orders, and it is evident that he at first entertained the idea with a certain approval. This plan of payment was obviously better than that of including the artist's honorarium in his estimates.

Clement thus commenced his transactions with Michelangelo on a very different footing from his predecessors. Julius, however affectionately he regarded him, forgot at times to pay him, and the system, already alluded to, of comprehending his personal payments in the sums advanced for work, evidently led to serious misunderstandings, especially in the case of the Julian monument, subjecting the great sculptor to calumnious accusations and inflicting upon him mortification and suffering. Leo's advances were made on the same footing and certainly do not appear to have been generously calculated; Michelangelo was very inadequately paid for his labour. There is a remarkable allusion in the letter of Messer Fattucci to the « Façade » with regard to which Michelangelo's engagement had terminated; it may have been that Clement had some idea of resuming this interesting and important enterprise.

Michelangelo at first regarded the plan of the salary with favour, or he would not himself have suggested its amount. [1] On reflection however he refused it and it required pressure from his friends to induce him to take the provision so freely offered, and for some months he endured privation rather than do so. It appears that he was not satisfied with the nature of the work required of him; this can only be explained by supposing that he did not in reality like employment as an architect, or commissions which interfered with his practice as a sculptor. He had been made a painter against his will by Julius, an engineer equally against his will by Leo, and now Clement imposed more architectural works upon him than was agreeable to him. On

[1] His letters show his doubts « I do not know » he writes « what I shall think a year hence. »

being required to consider the plan of the Library, he said, « it is not my profession, » the very expression which he used to Julius in 1508, when pressed to paint the vault of the Sixtine.

The new Sacristy of San Lorenzo [1] was making progress however. By Michelangelo's contract with the quarrymen at Carrara the marbles ordered in April 1521 were to be forwarded to Florence in eighteen months. A portion reached that city during the short reign of Adrian, and were ready for the Sculptor's operations so soon as the election of Cardinal de' Medici to the Pontificate gave a new impulse to works, which, so far as the sculpture was concerned, were in abeyance, but the building of the Chapel made progress even in Adrian's reign. Being of Fiesole stone, he was independent of supplies from Carrara, and that the walls had risen to a considerable height is shown by the fact, that, soon after the election of Clement, Michelangelo commenced the architectural parts of one of the monuments, which he could not otherwise have done.

The workmen engaged gave no little trouble, and a certain Stefano di Tommaso, who from a miniature painter had become an architect and had acquired sound practical knowledge, and whom he employed as clerk of works, showed a particularly bad disposition, which recalls the prudent advice of Domenico Boninsegni to employ men of « some other nation » rather than Florentines « who all pretended to be such great masters. »

Michelangelo thus writes to his valued friend Piero Gondi, who had been kind to Stefano:

« Piero. The poor ingrate has this nature that if you succour him in his necessity he says that what you give him is of your superfluity: if you put him to some work to do him good, he says that you were obliged to do so, not knowing how to do it

[1] Now called the Medici Chapel. It is not used as a Sacristy.

yourself, you put him to it, and of all the benefits which he receives, he says that they proceed from the necessities of the benefactor.

The ingrate waits till such time as he, who has done him good, commits some blunder which may give him an opportunity of speaking ill of him, which if he is believed, he thinks that he is thereby relieved of his obligation. So it has always happened unfortunately for me, and no one has annoyed me — I speak of artisans — but those to whom I have done good with all my heart, then because of some oddity or craze which they say I have, which harms no one except myself, they have spoken ill of me and vituperated me, which is the reward of all good men.

I write to you on the conversation of yesterday evening regarding the affairs of Stefano; as yet I have not placed him, for if I could not be there myself I could not have found another to put there; all is done to do him good rather than for my service, and finally that which I do, I do for his benefit, for I have undertaken to aid him and I cannot abandon him; let him however not think or believe that I do it from any need; men are not wanting thank God, and if I have urged him on these days more than usual, I have done so because I am busier than usual, and it is necessary that I should understand if he can or if he will or if he knows how to serve me, so that I may be able to think of my affairs. Not seeing clearly his wishes, I, yesterday evening requested you, who had undertaken to let me know his opinion, to ask if he knows how to do that which I require, and if he can whether he will. And if it be possible that you should learn from him what he wants per month to be over the workmen, and to teach them to do the work and that which I may order. As to the workmen I pay them. I requested this of you yesterday evening, and again I beg that you explain to me what mind he is of, and do not wonder that I have written

to you on the same subject, for it imports me much for various reasons, and chiefly for this that if I gave him up without explaining myself and put another in his place I should be held up amongst the Piagnoni (the followers of Savonarola) as the greatest traitor that ever was in this world, although I was justified. Therefore I beg that you will help me, true, I give you trouble, but you wish me well.»

21st day of January 1524.[1]

MICHELAGNIOLO
Sculptor in Florence.

In this letter Michelangelo alludes regretfully to his own hasty temper, and from his description of the disposition of Stefano, he could hardly have adopted a more certain method of insuring trouble to himself and discord amongst his workmen, than by the employment of this ill conditioned man. In the last sentence the allusion to the Piagnoni or followers of Savonarola, throws light on this extraordinary appointment. Michelangelo had been an adherant of Savonarola, and feared to offend the Piagnoni, of whom this Stefano was one.

Whilst busy with the Sacristy and the monuments of the Medici at the commencement of 1524, the Pope proposed another work to Michelangelo to which he attached great importance, that was the erection of a building, to contain the famous collection of books and manuscripts which formed the Medici Library. Giovanni Francesco Fattucci acted as intermediary between the Pope and the artist, and by a letter of the second of January requested that two designs might be prepared for consideration, one in the Greek and the other in the Latin style. To this request Michelangelo replied that although he had heard the wish of the Pope and what had been said on the subject by Ste-

[1] Buonarroti Archives. There is also a copy of this letter on the back of an Architectural drawing in the Buonarroti Museum Florence.

fano, still he had no precise information of where the Pope wished the new building to be, and he would await the return of Stefano from Carrara, « to obtain better information, and to do all that I shall be able to do, although it is not my profession. »[1] This is a singular expression of diffidence and shows that, at this time, confidence in himself as a constructive architect was not established. The problem given him to solve, was a difficult one. He had undertaken the front of San Lorenzo and the new Sacristy, but neither presented such difficulties in practical design as the proposed Library, and he therefore wished for the return from Carrara of the experienced Stefano, before giving his reply.

Having examined the site and considered the nature of the building required, Michelangelo prepared the necessary drawings and sent them to Giovanni Fattucci to be shown to the Pope.

On the tenth of March, Fattucci wrote that the Pope had seen the designs and had said: « There is the right to do that one next the piazza, that is to say the longest, which is ninety-six braccia. There remains a little doubt on his mind as to the stair, for rising six braccia: nor does it please him that you should place wooden joists and beams over the Chambers, lest they should be exposed to the danger of some drunkard, who might set the library on fire; he wishes you to think whether it can be vaulted, and he thinks it possible, because the span is so small, that the walls will carry the vaulting. He thinks much of the ceiling, and wishes it beautifully designed and not merely panelled, but with some new fantasy. I return to you the plan of the library. There are marked in it two small studies between which, is the window, which faces the entrance of the Library, and in these little studies he desires to place certain books to be kept secret; and he also wishes to utilize those, which have the door between them; and farther he wishes to know what the

[1] Letter to Francesco Fattucci, January 1524.

window at the head of the Library looks upon, whether on a garden, or on roofs or stables. Inform him by all means, and you will send the design and do it in such a manner, that it will be seen how the stairs are to rise those six braccia, and explain all, and anyhow send some one on the roof to see what that window looks over. With regard to the houses which are towards the Via della Stufa, he says that he will have them thrown down, please God. »[1]

A few days after Fattucci wrote again in the name of the Pope « that he should build the Library where he wished, that is over the rooms on the side of the old Sacristy, in every case send the design and put in the stair exactly and that it may be well understood, and arrange, that at the upper end of the Library there may be a window between the two little studies of about six braccia each, as it is drawn in the other, and two others which will be on each side of the door. And with regard to fire, the Pope wishes that the rooms under the Library may be vaulted in case some drunkard, as may occur amongst priests, might set fire to a room, and it might spread from the room to the Library; and above he would like a beautiful ceiling, but wishes to avoid square panels like those here, which do not please him. »[2]

This terminates the correspondence at this time on the subject of the Library, which was not recommenced till a later period. It is interesting to observe the Pope's manner of directing the preparation of plans and his criticisms upon them, when laid before him. He does not examine them with careless eye nor merely look at the general taste of the design, he considers the disposal of the spaces, the measurements of the details, whether a stair can be included in a given space, which shows that Michelangelo did not supply a section as well as a plan, he inquires

[1] [2] The Buonarroti Archives.

what a window looks over. He is in fact eminently practical and judicious. It is probable that it was a relief to him to turn from his political troubles to such congenial occupations, and art owes much to this flexibility on the part of Sovereign Pontiffs, who regarded it with favour and found time in the midst of labours of state, in comparison with which those of most other sovereigns were light, to promote its prosperity and the well being of its professors, by a personal care and attention so remarkable. The history of the Library, for which Clement was desirous of providing a home and in the plans for which he took so intelligent an interest, may be briefly referred to.

The famous collection of books and manuscripts known as the Library of the Medici, and second only to that of the Vatican, owed its origin to the zeal and learning of Roberto de'Rossi, who was invited whilst resident in Constantinople to accept the Chair of Greek literature in Florence. After many changes of owners and many vicissitudes, during which happily the collection was further enriched, the books and manuscripts were placed by the care of Clement in the home prepared for them by Michelangelo.

Part of this Library came into the hands of Cosimo de' Medici, the elder, who was a pupil of de' Rossi, and the rest of it passed in succession to various persons, who augmented the treasures which it contained, and finally to the Monks of San Marco, in whose convent a hall dating from 1444 was constructed by orders of Cosimo especially for the custody and care of books and manuscripts, and which, according to Flavio Biondo of Forlì, was the first library built in Italy. The monks did not long enjoy the privilege of this noble possession; they interfered in the affairs of the Republic, got into debt, and sold the famous library, which was bought for the sum of two thousand six hundred and fifty two ducats by the Cardinal Galeotto Fanciotto acting as Commissioner for the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici afterwards Leo X:

he conveyed it to Rome and placed it in the Villa Medici on the Pincio, where it remained till 1522. Both as Cardinal and subsequently as Pope, the possessor of this Library enriched it with valuable additions and expended large sums upon splendid bindings, in which all that taste and skill could do were exhausted. Competent agents versed in literature were sent into all countries, where it was to be hoped that rare works might be found, provided with unlimited means for their purchase, and he sent a friend to Denmark, not so easy an enterprise then as now, it being rumoured that the lost books of Livy were preserved in that distant land.

To make his earnest desires for the acquisition of rare books as widely known as possible, at all events amongst literary men, he caused to be inserted on the back of the title page of the edition of Tacitus, published by his orders in 1515, the following early specimen of an advertisement:

NOMINE LEONIS X PONT. MAX. PROPOSITA
PRAEMIA NON MEDIOCRIA SUNT
HIS QUI AD EUM LIBROS VETERES
NEQUE HACTENUS EDITOS ATTULERINT

On the death of Leo, his cousin and Executor Cardinal de' Medici caused the library to be conveyed to Florence, and when on the death of Adrian he was elected Pope, he determined to confide to Michelangelo the erection of a suitable edifice for the permanent preservation of the collection. Michelangelo was then occupied with the Medicean chapel, and it was decided that the new library should be built close to the same Basilica on the other side.

During the progress of the correspondence regarding the proposed Library buildings, advance was made with the new Sacristy and the monuments of the Medici, indicated by a memorandum written by Michelangelo on the twenty-ninth of March 1524. « I record, that Maestro Andrea of Fiesole, mason, foreman of the works of Santa Maria del Fiore has come to overlook the work of the sepulchres which I am making in the Sacristy of San Lorenzo, that is to place the stones before the men who square them, and he will come to see the work once a day for an hour, and if needful will stay half a day or all day, thus we have agreed, and the said Master Andrea asked me for this six ducats a month, and I offered him four.

And the said Master Andrea obtained at the Cathedral works the necessary consent from Messer Iacopo da Prato. »[1]

Nothing can be more practical or businesslike than these arrangements. Another record of the thirty-first March shows the advance which at this time had been made with the monuments.

« I record, how on this day the last of March there has been carried from my room of Via Mozza to San Lorenzo a piece of marble four braccia long (seven feet ten and a half inches) and a braccio and a half wide (two feet ten and a half inches) and from two thirds to three quarters thick to be used in the sepulchres of the Sacristy, and this is done because the masons have taken away from me a certain small cornice of two pilasters, so that being no longer there, it must be made over again. Not to keep them waiting, I have sent marble of my own, and if I send more for the other which is wanting, I shall write it below. The masons who have taken it from my room in Via Mozza to San Lorenzo, are these: Scipione of Settignano, Urbano Bando of Set-

[1] The Buonarroti Archives.

tignano, Marchione son of Scipione, Biancalana of Settignano, Bellegote of Settignano and Torello of Porta alla Croce.»[1]

Not only did these workmen give an extraordinary amount of trouble, but they stole masses of marble.

By measuring the central portion of the cornice of the first order of the elevation, immediately behind the Sarcophagus of Giuliano, it will be found that it corresponds closely with the block of marble described as having been sent from the Studio to the Chapel. The cornice is a little shorter, than the rough block, as would be the case when wrought; it rests upon two piers which may be described as pilasters, therefore by the end of March 1524 the first stage or order of the architectural background of Michelangelo's design was ready for its cornice.

During the progress of these works Michelangelo abstained from drawing his salary, and besides gave up a house expressly provided for his convenience and for facilitating his operations in San Lorenzo. The cause of this apparently extraordinary conduct upon his part was the state of affairs with the heirs of Julius II.

Michelangelo had always shown himself willing to go on with the monument and whenever he had opportunity, he gave his attention to it and worked with zeal, abandoning it only under pressure which he was unable to resist.

The question with the heirs this year entered on a new phase. The Cardinal Santi Quattro made new proposals to Michelangelo through the ever active Fattucci, stating « that he was entirely disposed to be guided by his wishes, even to the extent of the monument being completed by other artists» and he added «that he had the consent of the Duke of Urbino to this proposal.»

Unhappily in the course of these negotiations new differences of opinion took place, and the heirs determined to bring an

[1] The Buonarroti Archives.

action. This greatly distressed Michelangelo; he at once said rather than go to law he would acknowledge himself to be in the wrong, and in this mood — so unjust to himself — under great depression he wrote to Giovanni Spina.

« I suppose myself to have pleaded and lost, and to be obliged to give that satisfaction which I am already willing to give. If the Pope will aid me in this matter, he will greatly gratify me, seeing that now I cannot finish the monument of Julius, being old and suffering in health. An arbitrator may decide what I should restore of what I have received to execute it, so that I may be freed from this burden, and so that the relatives of Pope Julius with that repayment may have it done by whom they will to their satisfaction. Thus His Holiness might greatly aid me, and in this also, that I should have to restore as little as may be within the bounds of justice, and by obtaining a hearing for some of my reasons, how that for the Bronze statue of the Pope at Bologna and on other occasions, I had no payment whatever, as Ser Giovanni Fattucci well knows, and so soon as it is made clear what restitution I have to make, I will take stock of what I certainly have, and shall so act as to make restitution, and then I shall be able to think of the business of the Pope and to work, for in this way I do not live. I can attend to no works, no method could be adopted that would be safer for me, and it may be done amicably without law proceedings, and I pray God that the Pope may be pleased thus to arrange it, for it does not appear to me that it can be undertaken by any one else. » [1]

It has been evident throughout the history of the Monument of Julius, how highly Michelangelo esteemed the commission.

[1] The Buonarroti Archives.

He believed that it would in a special manner do him honour, it employed all his great faculties as a designer and sculptor, that is in that high branch of art which he most honoured, and in which he considered himself most skilful. But it was again and again interrupted, he was prevented going on with it and fulfilling the duties which he had bound himself to perform, for which he had received large advances of money, whilst he was compelled to execute other commissions, not — as he said himself — « within his profession. »

It is obvious that it was not Michelangelo's fault that the Monument was not completed. On the other hand the Della Rovere had just and serious cause of complaint, nor could the artist's counter claims affect their position. Of Michelangelo's belief in their justice there can be no question, but it seems doubtful if they could be legally enforced. The heirs had made a bargain for the execution of the Monument and advanced large sums, without any statement upon Michelangelo's part of his claims against the late Pontiff's estate, on account either of the bronze statue at Bologna or the frescos of the Chapel of Sixtus. In reality Michelangelo had done a great deal of work, which the interruptions proceeding from the acts of the successors of Julius in a measure made useless. The statues which occupied years of labour, and his models and materials were wasted, and whilst large sums had been advanced by the family of the Rovere, there was no prospect of the completion of the Monument without modification of the design.

As a protest against the interruption of his work, and to show his sense of the arbitrary manner in which he was compelled to give all his time to Clement, Michelangelo refused to accept his salary, and gave up the house which had been provided for him. A letter from his friend at Rome, Lionardo the saddler shows what was the impression made by his proceedings.

Rome 24th March 1524.

« Besides he tells me that you have refused to accept the provision, which seems to me the other craze, and that you have thrown up the house and do not work. My friend let me remind you, that you have enemies who say all the evil they can of you, and you have for friends a Pope, and Pucci and Iacopo Salviati, and the promise of their support, and you have a name to lose, especially where honour is involved; leave the questions of the Monument (of Julius) to those who wish you well, and resolve not to fail in the work for the Pope; rather die; take your salary, which is freely given. »[1]

This friendly letter soothed the agitated mind of Michelangelo. He was led to see that the form of protest which he had adopted was useless in respect of the powers that were, and did him no good with the family of Della Rovere. He returned to the house in San Lorenzo and continued his work, as he wrote to Giovanni Spina. « Like an honest man, who makes himself to be talked about, doing me great harm not to return there. »

It appears certain that the difference with the Executors of Julius and the threat of law proceedings took place in 1524, but whether before or after the above letter of Lionardo, is somewhat uncertain. Michelangelo does not appear to have accepted payment of his salary till October of the same year. He has left a record that on the nineteenth of that month he was paid four hundred broad ducats in gold, being his salary for eight months. It appears that he acted in an undecided not to say capricious manner, at one time reconciled to his position by the influence of his friends, then breaking away again and refusing all terms, no doubt owing to complaints which reached him from the Della Rovere.

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

That Pope Clement was determined to appropriate all his time is obvious and is shown by the correspondence renewed in May.

Giovanni Fattucci writes on the twenty-third May 1524:

« Being on sunday in the Belvedere and His Holiness conversing with Messer Iacopo of the monuments and of one thing or other, Messer Iacopo said to the Pope: Holy Father, your Holiness should make the sepulchre of Leo in San Lorenzo, and if your Holiness would take my advice, you would make your own there also. I thought that the Pope lent a willing ear, saying « in what manner? » Iacopo replied; if there be room, I would make two sepulchres with two sarcophagi as is proposed for Lorenzo and Giuliano seniors, and also another with two sarcophagi for both the Dukes, and two others opposite, one for Leo and the other for Clement. I thought that he was pleased and he said it would be needful to place two sarcophagi in the Chapel, if it will hold them.[1] Consequently I have wished to let you know that you may think over it and if you please yourself inform me and do not show that I have written to you, but rather allow it to appear that you think day and night about the affairs and interests of our Lord, and if you see what can be done, do not think about the expense. »[2]

The precise manner in which Michelangelo's time was occupied during the summer and autumn of 1524, is not recorded, but there can be no doubt that it was with the monuments of the Medici, because in October, as has just been stated, he claimed

[1] The idea was that the Chapel should contain Monuments of Lorenzo the Magnificent and of his brother Giuliano, of Lorenzo Duke of Urbino and Giuliano Duke of Nemours, and of Pope Leo and Clement. Well might the Pope doubt whether there would be room in the building.

[2] Buonarroti Archives.

payment of his salary, which he would not have done had he not worked for it. The readiness with which the four hundred ducats were payed shows that his progress was considered satisfactory.

During this time he also thought over the project for the proposed monument of Leo and Clement and sent his sketch to Fattucci, who acknowledged it on the seventh January 1525:

« By your last the design for the sepulchres is understood and His Holiness is much pleased with it: but he has doubts of that washing place where the stair is, he leaves it to you to think over it. Therefore think of doing something which shall be worthy of the Popes; and although His Holiness is greatly satisfied and takes much pleasure in it, and in the ground work and in everything, still it seems to me a small place for two Popes; and for my part I would put them where the Dukes are; but as one is almost entirely built, there is no order. Think of ornamenting them as much as possible, and dont care about expense: the Pope expects the design for that of Leo and his own. »[1]

It thus appears that Michelangelo had made a proposal in writing or sketched a plan in a very slight way and needing explanation. The criticism as to the washing place may excite surprise, but it is a needful feature of every Sacristy, and such lavatories have often been themes of the best artists and designers. A marble or stone vase of considerable size in a niche, ornamented by a Luca della Robbia, or carved by a Mino or a Desiderio are found in many Sacristies and excite the admiration of lovers of art. Fattucci admits that the Pope was highly pleased, but is himself « nothing unless he is critical » he adds his advice, which no doubt was well meant. It may be believed that Michelangelo made the most of the space at his disposal.

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

In April of this year, Michelangelo had occasion to remind Sebastian del Piombo of a promise which he had made, to finish a portrait of Anton Francesco degli Albizzi a Florentine Noble. On the twenty-second Sebastian thus replied:

« I have received a letter of yours to me most grateful, on account of the love and affection which you continually bear to me, which I do not merit, and sorry I am that you have had the trouble of hastening me with your letter, that I should finish the picture of Messer Anton Francesco degli Albizzi: it was not needful to vex yourself about so small an affair: it may have given you more trouble to write the letter to me, than to make a statue: for I think, I see in much of it the humours of other persons.

The faith and promise, which I had given to Messer Anton Francesco, was enough, and although I failed him for five or six days, there was no occasion for such a fuss: pardon me.

To me it seems a greater difficulty to paint a hand or simple piece of drapery in our art, than to make all the designs for stairs in the world; [1] pardon me if I write to you in this manner, for I believe that I do so to one who understands me, and that you will not take it ill. I have taken so much time, that I might do honour to you and to myself, and that I might serve Messer Anton Francesco, who appears to me to be deserving of service, although for him and the Godfather Leonardo I have left all my own affairs. » [2]

The portrait being completed and sent to Florence, it excited great admiration, and Michelangelo, after he had seen it, again

[1] « Che far tutte le scale del mondo. » Without Michelangelo's letter it is difficult to understand Sebastian's allusion. Possibly the Portrait 409. Pitti Gallery.

[2] Buonarroti Archives.

wrote, that he had once spoken of him as unique amongst painters, and told him how the picture had been praised at a supper at which he had taken part, to try and break through the low spirits from which he suffered.

Florence, May 1525.

« My Dearest Sebastian yesterday our friend Captain Cuio [1] and certain other gentlemen in their goodness, desired that I should sup with them, which gave me great pleasure and relieved me somewhat from my sadness and my crotchets. Not only did I take pleasure in the supper party which was very pleasant, but also in the conversation which took place. My pleasure was increased when in the course of conversation Captain Cuio mentioned your name, nor was this all, I was still more delighted when speaking of art I heard the Captain say that you were unparalleled in the world and such was the general opinion in Rome. Had it been possible to feel greater pleasure it would have been mine hearing this tribute to my judgment. Do not then deny when I write to you that you are unequalled, for there are many witnesses, and here is a picture, thank God, which proves it to every one who has eyes to see. » [2]

Michelangelo was warm in his affections as in dislikes, still this letter which apparently refers to the portrait of Albizzi is a high tribute to Sebastian's merits as a portrait painter.

Vasari states that he was received as a Pupil by Michelangelo in 1525, but remained only a short time, as his Master was under the necessity of proceeding to Rome to receive the instructions of the Pope regarding some designs for the new Sa-

[1] Cuio Dini. He was killed in the sack of Rome.
[2] Buonarroti Archives.

cristy and the Library of San Lorenzo. Vasari falls into an accidental error as to the date of his introduction to the studio, which took place the year before, but the learned annotators of Le Monnier's edition of Vasari's lives of Artists, accept 1525 as the year in which Michelangelo visited Rome for the above purpose, although they do not fix the actual date. From the paucity of records in the form of letters of the early part of this year, it seems probable that Michelangelo was chiefly occupied with the Medici monuments, but that his peaceful avocations were again interrupted by a revival of the question of the Julian monument is apparent from letters written towards the close of 1525.

It is probable that the year was advanced before he made this visit to Rome. Vasari says « Michelangelo departed for Rome in a hurry, and was again molested by Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino, nephew of Julius, who complained of him, saying that he had received sixteen thousand crowns for the said monument, and he menaced him with evil consequences. Arrived in Rome, Pope Clement who required his services, advised him to reckon with the agents of the Duke, as the Pope thought, seeing what Michelangelo had done, that he was creditor rather than debtor. »

It appears from this that Pope Clement considered Michelangelo's counter claims against the heirs of Julius the second, justified. Vasari then goes on to say that the Pope and Michelangelo having consulted over many things determined to finish the new sacristy and the library, and so having left Rome he returned to Florence and witnessed the completion of the cupola of the former edifice.

Michelangelo's personal work for the monuments was interrupted at this time by interference with his arrangements for the supply of marble. The practical consequences were so serious, that he felt it to be necessary to make a direct appeal

to the Pope and to explain the circumstances to him, as well as to beseech him to mitigate the ill-judged obstructions to which he was exposed. Unfortunately the letter is not dated, but the closing in of the cupola certainly took place this year.

« Most Holy Father. As go-betweens are often the occasion of serious misunderstanding, I have taken the liberty of writing directly to your Holiness. With regard to the sepulchres here of San Lorenzo, I know not which is best, the evil which does good, or the good which harms. I am certain, bad and mad as I am, that had I been allowed to go on as I began, then the marbles for this work would have been by this time all here, at less cost than has been made up to this time, and they would have been blocked out as required, and would have been as good, as those which I have done hitherto: now I see brought here a certain quantity, which I do not know whether it will suit, nor do I know what they are about in the quarry, and I see a prospect of much delay; therefore should anything happen, which may prove displeasing to your Holiness, I exonerate myself thus, that not having authority, neither am I to blame; and this I pray, that if it be wished that I do something, men may not be set over me in my art, but that faith be reposed in me and freedom of commission, and it will be seen what I can do, and the account which I can give of myself.

The lantern of the cupola of the Chapel of San Lorenzo has been covered in by Stefano; and every one is pleased with it, and so I believe will be your Holiness. I have had the ball made about a braccio in diameter and I have, to vary it from the other, had it made in facets, which I think will have a graceful effect, and so it is done. » [1]

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

Whilst he was occupied closing in the Cupola with its lantern, some friends remarked to him: « You ought to vary your lantern from that of Brunelleschi, on the old Sacristy » he replied: « It may be varied, but not improved. » So impartial a judge at this time was Michelangelo of the work of others.

The above letter directed to the Pope is very clear as to the annoyances to which Michelangelo was subjected. It has been already stated that in April 1521, he had ordered marble for the Medici monuments at Carrara, and he left drawings for the guidance of the workmen and those who blocked out the masses of marble which he required, there was no other way by which he could be properly supplied, but it is manifest from the above letter, that persons, he does not say whom, but who were set over him, ordered blocks of marble without consulting him, which reached Florence in their rude forms, neither dressed nor with the preliminary work on them which he required, thus causing to him, as he remarks, great loss of time, and much additional labour. There can be little doubt that these were the acts of persons influenced by interested motives. An official at the Vatican had before tried to induce him to charge the blocks brought to Florence for the front of San Lorenzo over again, when some of them were used for the Sacristy, and on his indignant refusal became his enemy.

To set officials over him who interfered with his work was a profound mistake, and but for his own statement, it would seem incredible. He was engaged at the time on one of those wondrous statues which have been the admiration of succeeding generations, and as he worked as was his wont, in the fervour of his genius bringing forth from the marble the conceptions of his intellect, it is not to be wondered at, that harassed by busy-bodies dressed in brief authority, he resented their interference and appealed directly to the only authority which could remedy these evils.

It appears from more than one letter that as the year advanced, Michelangelo's power of work was impaired by the annoyances to which he was exposed, and it is a remarkable fact that he, a second time, refused to draw his salary, satisfied rather to suffer inconvenience and deprivation, than to submit to interference and dictation. He felt it to be necessary to make his position known to the Pope. This time he wrote through Giovanni Francesco Fattucci:

24th October 1525.

« I shall never cease from working for Pope Clement with all the strength I have, not much now for I am old, provided that the discourtesies, which are offered me, be discontinued; for they have a great effect upon me, and have prevented me working now for some months. It is not possible to work at one thing with the hands, and another with the brain especially in sculpture. They say here that they do it to spur me on, but I say that they spur badly, who drive one backwards. I have not accepted the salary for a year now, and I combat with poverty. I am very sensitive to annoyances, and I have so many that they keep me more occupied, than my art. I have not a person to serve me for want of means. » [1]

This letter shows in the first place that his appeal to Clement had not removed the obstacles to his work of which he complained, he ceased to draw his salary and probably to work, refusing thus to be bound by the conditions imposed upon him, which were intolerable, or to receive the payment which bound him so firmly to them. From what he says of his poverty, it is probable that his funds were again exhausted in providing for his

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

father and brothers; he had received a payment of four hundred ducats the previous October, and could not therefore have been in want but from such demands upon his purse.

Negotiations were at this time again in progress on the subject of the Monument of Julius, certain to agitate as usual the mind of the artist, although on this occasion light does seem to break in and some hope of an accommodation is apparent. Michelangelo had written to Fattucci rather to come to terms for a repayment upon his part, than to agree that he should undertake more work. He was bound to the service of Clement, he was not however old as he said and might well hope to do more. But the idea had been entertained, that to abbreviate whatever work remained to be done and to diminish the outlay, the Monument should be attached to the wall like that of Pius. Michelangelo accepted a scheme which might be carried out by other artists under his direction, and on the 30th of October 1525 Fattucci wrote to him how much he was gratified with his letter accepting that proposal, and he besought him to hasten to forward the design that it might be sent to the Duke of Urbino and to Messer Bartolommeo della Rovere.

« If it pleases them » he adds « we will annul the contract with Aginensis and make another, and His Holiness will grant you thereon absolution as you desire. »

Michelangelo's fast friend Iacopo Salviati writing from Rome tries to lighten his load of care and to soothe his disturbed feelings:

Rome, 30th October 1525.

« My Dear Michelangelo. I am truly sorry to learn what fancies have entered your head, and still more I regret them, when I hear that they prevent you working, the very way to please those who wish you ill, verifying that which they have

always said of your conduct; besides it is contrary to the wishes of our Lord, and assuredly it increases my sorrow on your account seeing the love which I bear you, that things take this turn, and that you should be of opinion that, that which the Priest has written to you is only to soothe you and not to do you good, as His Holiness wishes: and besides this that every thing that they do, is only to spur you; these are waggeries and inventions of those, who would do you little good, to turn you from this work, as all else has failed, and so being envious of your glory and well being, to cause you to abandon it. For my part, I do not see nor can I understand that in any respect Baccio can be compared to you, or can do any thing which in the smallest way can be placed side by side with your works, and I am astonished that you should place him on such a footing, and besides, that you should believe that our Lord should fail to do what you wish, either in this or in any thing else. Let them say what they like and attend to your work, and drive from your mind these vain fancies, which are not for your credit or our Lord's, who on his part will never fail you, and he has commissioned me again that as you have not had your salary till now, as Spina has written to me, that I cause him under all circumstances to pay it to you.»[1]

This is plain speaking to a sensitive man, and there is kindly good sense in it. The allusion to Baccio Bandinelli is appropriate, and it is surprising that Michelangelo should ever have admitted of comparison, but he knew that Clement extended his countenance to this bad artist and ill disposed man, and he may have measured the Pontiff's professions of good will to himself, by his patronage of such a sculptor as Bandinelli, which was so little to the credit of his discernment.

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

The universality of great artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so often adverted to by modern writers and held up to admiration as compared with the limited powers and narrow fields of labour of modern artists, may have been too dearly purchased. It is evident that the most incongruous and sometimes unsuitable employments were thrust upon eminent artists. Lionardo da Vinci's time was consumed in so many ways, that he produced few works in the branch of fine art in which he excelled. Michelangelo, spite of his protests, had commissions forced upon him which were distasteful to him, always to be taken into consideration whilst criticising the results of such labour. His genius triumphed over almost every obstacle and his involuntary work merits our highest admiration, when the circumstances under which it was executed are considered. Raffael met the varied demands made on his time and thoughts, in the only way in which they could be successfully met, by surrounding himself with experts; painters, modellers and decorators of every kind.

Michelangelo's turn of mind and habits were different. It has been seen that he employed assistants, but he was evidently impatient, and dissatisfied that they could not rise to what he expected of them. Again and again he tried the experiment, but rarely successfully, it cannot have been that he willingly left so many works imperfect, for when in early life he could devote himself without interruption to the subjects of his choice, how exquisite the finish and completeness of his statues! he could not tear himself from them whilst a touch remained to be given to make them perfect in his eyes.

The ceiling of the Sixtine Chapel is an example of the same devoted conscientious labour. It has been shown that he availed himself of assistants, but their operations were strictly limited to minor portions of the painting. How different this, from the

frescos of the Stanze or the Farnesina by Raffael, in most of which unity of taste and of execution are impaired by the employment of assistants to paint many of the most important figures of these celebrated frescos. Michelangelo in a different spirit learnt by experience that no one but himself could execute his great designs. The solitary instance of the statue of Christ sent to Rome with Pietro Urbano, who was charged to finish the hair the fingers and the toes, apart from his supervision, must have confirmed Michelangelo in his opinion, after the evidence of the incapacity of his assistant.

It might have been supposed that seeing how he was employed and how he was harassed, Pope Clement would have been careful not to increase his burdens. Yet a few days after the sympathetic and friendly reproaches of Salviati, with protestation of the Pope's indulgent views, we find the following remarkable correspondence. Fattucci thus writes in the name of Clement:

10th November 1525.

« He desires that thou shalt think of the Colossus, which he intends shall be made on the Piazza of San Lorenzo.... and that it shall be so high that it shall rise above the summit of his house or at least to be as high.... and that it shall turn its back to the house of Messer Luigi della Stufa and its face towards his own (the Pope's).... and as it will be very large put it up in pieces. »[1]

Michelangelo treated this extravagant proposal with a grim humour illustrative of the independence with which he could express himself. He appears to assume that the Pope was joking, and thus replied:

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

« Messer Giovan Francesco: Had I as much strength, as I have pleasure in your last, I should believe myself able to manage, and that soon, all the things which you write to me about: but as I have not so much, I will do what I can.

With regard to the Colossus of forty Braccia (sixty feet) which you tell me has to go, or rather which is to be put at the corner of the Medici garden opposite the corner of Messer Luigi della Stufa, I have thought of it, and not a little, as you say; and it seems to me that on that corner it will not be well placed, because it would fill up too much of the street, but on the other side where the barber's shop is, it would, as I think be much better, have the piazza in front of it and it would not produce such inconvenience in the roadway. As probably the removal of the shop would not be tolerated by reason of the advantages of the entrance, I have thought of making the statue sitting, and the seat would be so high that making the said work hollow within, as it would be convenient to build it in pieces, so the shop of the barber might be in the basement and the rent would not be lost: and as the shop must have a chimney as it now has, it occurs to me to place a horn of plenty in one hand, empty within however, which would serve as chimney. Then the head of the same figure being empty also, like the other members, I think that it might be made use of, for there is a green grocer in the piazza, my great friend, who has privately assured me that it would make a capital dovecot. Another fancy presents itself to me, only it would be necessary to make the figure much larger and it would be possible, being in pieces, to make a tower and the top would serve as a belfry for San Lorenzo, which that Church is much in need of, and by placing the bells inside the head and the sound coming out of the mouth, it would seem that the figure cried « misericordia, » especially on festival days when there is frequent ringing with the largest bells.

With regard to bringing the marbles for the said statue, that no one might know anything about it, it appears to me that they might be brought at night; well packed, so that no one might see them; there might be some danger at the gate it is true, but for this, some plan might be adopted: at the worst Sangallo would not fail, who keeps the wicket till daylight. To do or not to do the things to be done, which you say have to be overlooked, it is better to leave him to do, who has to do it; I have so much to do, that I do not care to do more.

This is enough for me, that it be honourable. I do not reply to everything, for Spina comes soon to Rome, and by word of mouth he will say more than I can with the pen, and with more detail. » [1]

The Colossus of which Michelangelo made fun was no more thought of.

But at this time the Pope wished him to design and cause to be executed a magnificent tabernacle for the altar of San Lorenzo, to contain the vases and reliquaries presented to that Church by the Medici. Michelangelo suggested that it would be better to place a Ciborium over the Church-door, and the Pope wrote through Fattucci:

« Above the central door, but he would be better pleased if it could be placed lower; or the Pope would resolve to place it over the door of the new Sacristy, as before decided; should it be decided by you to place it over the altar it must be approached by a ladder and not otherwise. In case of making it in the new Sacristy, think of a place where the reliquaries and vases may stay, which our Lord wishes to place. Any way give advice

[1] Buonarroti Archives. Florence, October 1525.

both about the altar with the ladder, or over the door of the Sacristy. I believe that our Lord will do what you like.» [1]

Finally the idea of a ciborium was given up and a sacrarium was constructed over the central entrance door of the church. It appears to be thought that the Corinthian order within this portico is by Michelangelo, but it has every indication in its design and details of being by Brunelleschi. It is in gray Fiesole stone whilst above it is a ballustrade within which are three doors, the architraves of white marble, leading to closets in the thickness of the wall. There is no stair in the wall or outside, and whilst the sacred vessels remained there till the time of Pietro Leopoldo, the means of access for the clergy must have been even absurdly inconvenient.

The architecture of the doors and ballustrade is in Michelangelo's manner.

In addition to his other work Michelangelo prepared in 1525 designs for the Library which, towards the end of that year, that is on the seventh of December, he sent for the consideration of the Pope. He received in reply a note from Pietro Paolo Marzi, the Pope's Secretary, dated the twenty-third of December, who stated that the «Pope was satisfied and he thought that the circular windows would be handsome.» It would seem that these were skylights for he goes on to say. «But the Pope does not know whether the dust which will gather on them will not be greater than the light which they will afford; and as to the question of raising the wall two braccia to make the windows as you advise, part of the roof being up you must undo it and alter the beams, will it then support the weight and not do harm to the building?» [2]

[1] [2] Buonarroti Archives dated 29th November 1525.

The Pope manifestly was of a practical turn of mind, he appears to have thought that the works which he had commissioned were not making sufficiently rapid progress. Under the above criticism of Michelangelo's skylights, he wrote with his own hand:

« Thou knowest that Pontiffs do not live long, and we cannot too strongly express our wish to see, or at least to hear, that the chapel with the sepulchres of our relatives and also the library, should be finished. These we recommend to thee, in the meanwhile we will, as thou hast already said, exercise a saintly patience. God put it into thy heart to hasten both together; doubt not, that there will be wanting to thee either commissions or rewards so long as we live. Now remain with the blessing of God and ours. »

JULIUS. [1]

This is an earnest and remarkable letter showing the estimation in which Clement held Michelangelo, as well as his sense of the difficulty which he experienced in the management of his excitable and variable temper.

[1] Buonarroti Archives. Clement here signs with his name of Baptism.

Chapter XIII

The correspondence regarding the Laurentian Library was actively resumed in 1526. The building was so far advanced in 1525, that it was partly roofed in, but in the following year it was so far completed that its furniture and decorations became the subjects of consideration, and on the third of April 1525, a letter was written to Michelangelo informing him, amongst other things, of the Pope's wishes with regard to a carved wooden ceiling. His Holiness was of opinion, that the ceiling should be divided into three parts longitudinally, to correspond with the three parts into which the floor was divided, composed of a broad passage between two rows of desks with their seats, which contain to this day the magnificent collection of manuscripts.

The Pope also advised Michelangelo to procure a supply of firwood and walnut to make the desks and seats, and expressed his wish that the small library should resemble the reception room.

About the middle of April Michelangelo sent to his friend Giovanni Fattucci [1] his design for the door of the Library, and his idea for an inscription to be written above it. Fattucci when he had shown the design and inscription to the Pope thus wrote:

Rome, 18th April 1526.

« On Tuesday the seventeenth I received your design for the door, which after supper I showed to our Lord with more pleasure than I can tell you: and he read your letter at least five or six times; afterwards he read it aloud to his attendants saying that your suggestion was of such a quality, that he did not believe that there was a man in Rome who could have thought of or invented it. And rising from table, he took away the drawing and the letter, and told me to return the next day or the day after and he would give me everything. Afterwards I heard from the Chamberlains, how our Lord said to the Treasurer and to Messer Paolo Jovio « I have to make a door which enters into a library, and there is to be placed an epitaph of a hundred or a hundred and forty letters, » he had counted the letters in yours. His Holiness was asked if he would like one thing more than another, and he answered: « Were I to tell you, I would take a sheet of paper and write it myself. Make several and I will select that which pleases me most; and should there be nothing which pleases me, I will give you a subject according to my idea. » So soon as I shall have it, I will send it to you. With regard to the wood work and other things he praised them, and about Master Giovanni of Udine, he says that he will send him to you, with this condition, that he will not that Master Giovanni should think of anything but working out what you

[1] Giovanni Fattucci the intimate friend of Michelangelo was a chaplain in the Cathedral of Florence.

may order, and for all His Holiness says that you should think what is to be done, and he will send him soon, and said: «I do not believe that he will do that vault in six months, not to speak of two.» With regard to the door he said that he never had seen anything so beautiful, neither ancient nor modern. With respect to Master Giovanni, advise me what you wish me to say, for, as I have said, he has decided that he should do all which you tell him, and he is quite content: so advise me once more.» [1]

Unhappily the inscription suggested by Michelangelo has not been preserved. The letter besides alluding to the ceiling, desks and doorway, showing that the Library was far advanced, refers to the Pope's desire that Giovanni of Udine should proceed to Florence to be at Michelangelo's orders, and as the Pope speaks of the vault, this must have reference to the decoration of the interior of the Cupola of the Chapel of the Medici.

Some of the accounts of the cost of the fabric of the Laurentian Library have been preserved. The first of these, without date, is obviously older than the last which are dated. They appear to have been prepared for the Pope's satisfaction.

« The expense of the Library. The walls have to be newly made, which have to be begun above the chambers which are above the cloister of San Lorenzo, where comes the level of the said Library, they are ordered one hundred braccia long from the portico before the entrance, one braccio thick, sixteen high with vaults above and below, amount, completely finished, to four hundred and thirty ducats without the transept.

The transept eighteen braccia every way and the space on all sides, with walls of the same height and thickness, one hundred and ninety-three ducats.» [2]

[1] [2] The Buonarroti Archives.

The other accounts of the year 1526 are more detailed, containing the sums expended for stone and hewing. Without the means of comparing these with the value of money now and the present cost of wages it is needless to repeat them, but the general impression made by their perusal is, that materials and workmanship were cheap.

Whilst the Medici Chapel was so far completed in 1526 that Giovanni da Udine visited it to prepare for its decoration, the works of the Laurentian Library dragged on for years. It was built and covered in, but many delays took place owing to political causes and to the nature of its ornament. The richly carved ceiling, executed by the sculptors in wood Carrota and Tasso, must have occupied some years. The seats and desks carved by the same artists with the assistance of Battista del Cinque and Ciapino, must have required a considerable amount of time and probably were not commenced till the ceiling was finished.[1] The flooring by Tribolo is very elaborate, of much the same general design as the ceiling, but formed of an inlay of a singularly durable cement, for unless it has been renewed, of which there is no appearance, it has lasted in good order till now.

The painted windows are popularly attributed to Giovanni da Udine, but they are dated 1558 and 1568, before which last date Giovanni was dead. It is not the least likely that he had anything to do with the execution even of the earliest; that he made the designs also appears to be doubtful, for they are obviously by two artists, of whom the last is by far the best. In method of drawing they much more resemble the work of Fran-

[1] Writing of these seats to Michelangelo on the seventeenth July 1533. Sebastian del Piombo on the part of the Pope thus expresses himself. «Our Lord desires that they should all be of carved walnut wood; do not hesitate to spend three florins more, it does not matter, provided that they are «alla Cosimesca» that is that they resemble the works of the Magnificent Cosimo.»

cesco Salviati than of Giovanni da Udine; but he also was dead when those dated 1568 were erected. In early life he had lessons from the famous Dominican glass painter Marsilla, and there is painted glass attributed to him, which in its style and idea of colour strongly resembles the best in the Laurentian. The designs may have been his, but executed afterwards, like so many windows in Florence, by the Gesuati monks. [1]

The invention of the ornament of the ceiling and therefore of the pavement and that of the carved seats are attributed to Michelangelo himself. On what grounds it is difficult to say, on none certainly of sound criticism.

The ornament in question is neither better nor worse than that in vogue at the time; it has no special character which might induce the belief that it was designed by an artist, who so invariably departed from ordinary and prescribed forms in all that he did.

Wherever ornament is found, undoubtedly designed by Michelangelo, it shows little appreciation on his part of the naturalism and elegance of that of the early Masters of the Revival. He preferred to imitate the ancient Roman manner and where the usual forms are prevalent, as in the architecture of the Monument of Julius and the ceiling and seats of the Laurentian Library, it may safely be assumed that beyond prescribing the general divisions — in the case of the Library indicated by Pope Clement himself — he left the details to the ornamentists whom he employed.

[1] These windows both in design and colour are admirably suited to Italian Architecture and offer useful lessons at the present time. Introduced into a Library where plenty of light was indispensable, white glass prevails. There is much yellow stain and where colour is wanted in some parts, pot metal is introduced but there is not much of it. The shadows are vigorously painted in enamel brown of a rich tone. Unlike modern painted glass, the figures and ornament are drawn with all the skill of an educated artist, and it is a pleasure to look at them. As windows they perform their function of admitting light, they harmonize with the architecture, they are graceful in design and the drawing and execution are calculated to please the most critical eye for form.

In 1526 the two important architectural works which Michelangelo had conducted were completed with the exception of the decoration ordered by the Pope, and may therefore be reviewed apart from the designs of the decorators.

It has been already observed that the only remaining sketch for the monument of Julius is not drawn to scale. Other sketches of architectural designs by Michelangelo also exist which are manifestly drawn by the eye only. In examining the interior of the Laurentian Library, it is felt, that the architectural details have been drawn in the first place, in the same manner, rather than in obedience to any rule of practice founded upon measurement, and that in the working drawings but little advance towards accuracy had been made on the sketches, for none of those well considered, subtle and beautiful geometrical proportions of parts discoverable in the finest monuments of classic, or of mediæval architecture, are present in this design of Michelangelo.

The general appearance of the interior of the library is that of a temple turned outside in. In all good architecture there is a harmonious and well balanced combination of the masses, with appropriate details which in their turn are arranged with due attention to constructive conditions and use. Supporting members are characterized by strength, crowning members are adapted to their positions in relation to structure, those uppermost for instance give shelter to those below.

In the Laurentian Library the supporting members are weak. A long series of thin pilasters divide the wall into panels and carry a cornice of very poor design, in which guttæ are introduced, showing no study of the nature of this feature in ancient examples. The windows are designed as if intended for the exterior of an edifice rather than an interior, with thin architraves of much simplicity and breadth, but of eccentric forms; they have, heavy cornices which from their weight and projections give an

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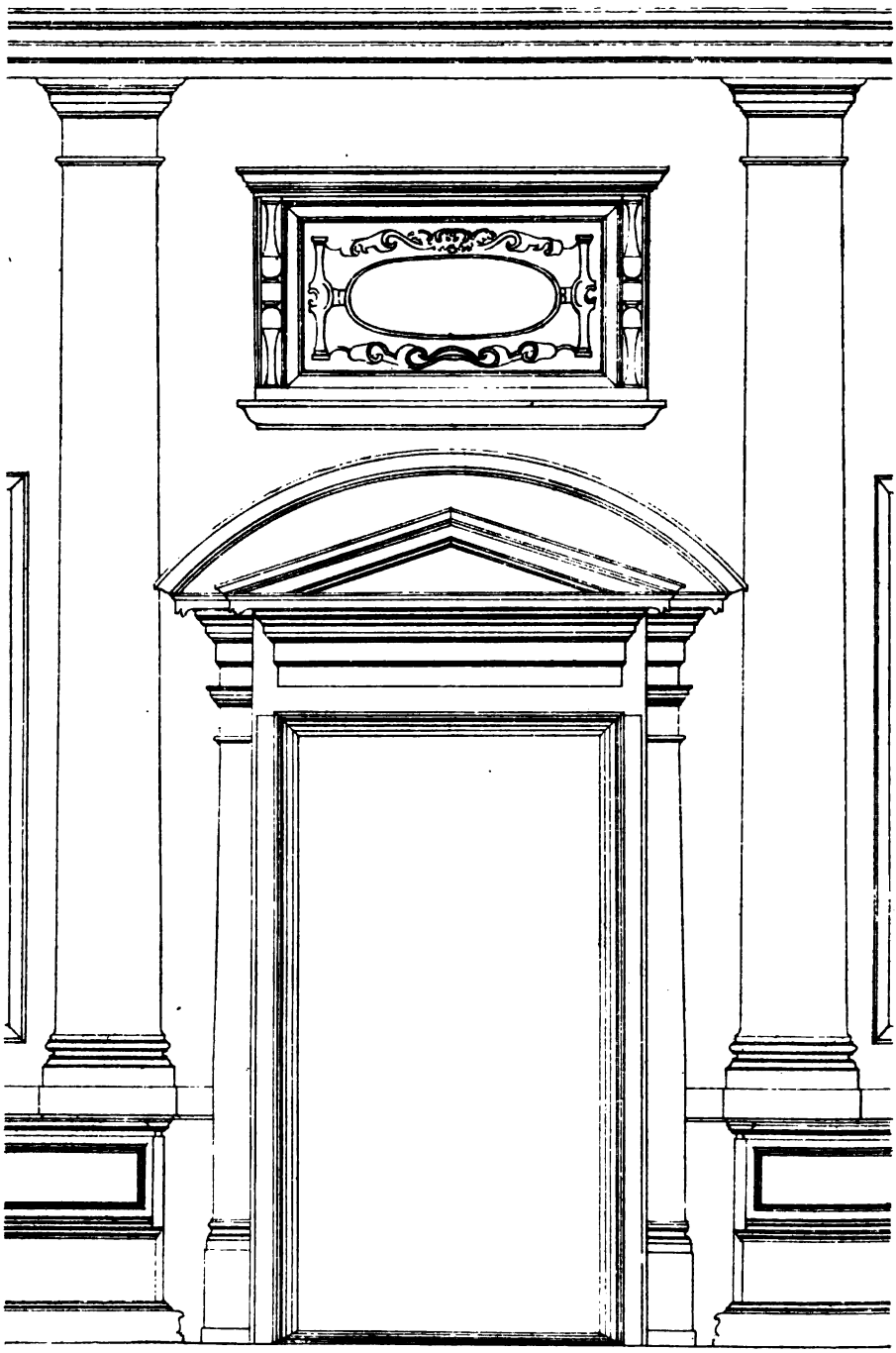

LAURENTIAN LIBRARY ELEVATION OF DOORWAY

PLATE 11.

appearance of still greater weakness to the crowning cornice. Above these windows are panels which can only be likened to intersole windows, but that they are blanks. They may have been intended to contain sculpture, but the mouldings are heavy it may be said clumsy, and again are much fitter for outside than inside work.

The door of entrance so much praised by the Pope, consists in the first place of a Doric order, weak in its details to feebleness. Perhaps there is no poorer specimen of Doric columns to be found anywhere. These carry a trabeation of the heaviest kind, literally gigantic in its parts, and surmounted by a curved pediment of slight design over which is seen the panel, on which no doubt Michelangelo intended to place the inscription so greatly admired by the Pope. In front of this doorway there is a second, formed of thin stone partitions cutting the columns in half and advancing into the Library. [1] These partitions carry another entablature with a triangular pediment, which is inserted into the tympanum first described. This prodigious doorway is so massive and so heavy in its parts, that it makes the lightness and flatness of the rest of the architecture of the Library still more apparent.

With regard to the details, they also evidently are by an artist habituated at this time to sketch without measuring and without considering the relative proportions and uses of the parts. They are alternately very heavy and very thin and wiry, and as they are seen by the diffused light of a great number of windows, they are not assisted by any pleasant effect of chiaroscuro, whilst their defects are enhanced by the whitewash, with which it is the specialty of modern Florentine taste to disfigure nearly all their monuments of architecture. As the stonework is gray ap-

[1] The object of this, is to receive the two leaves of the door when opened.

proaching almost to blackness, the effect upon this of the masses of nearly snow white with which it is contrasted, may be imagined.

The architecture of the Laurentian is the beginning of that style which, borrowing an Italian expression, is termed the Barrocco, of which no doubt Michelangelo was the founder. The task of building this Library was forced upon him. In vain he urged «it is not my profession.» It was undertaken without heart for the work, with a modest deprecation of being thus employed; in estimating its obvious defects these circumstances are not to be forgotten.

The Chapel of the Medici is in every respect a much nobler architectural composition internally than the Laurentian Library. It is square in plan with an arched recess in each face, one of which is prolonged into a chancel and contains a white marble altar, with candelabra of the same material, designed by Michelangelo. The recesses occupy the greater part of each face, but are comparatively shallow and two of them contain the famous monuments of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici.

The order selected by Michelangelo for his design is the Corinthian with its rich acanthus-decorated capitals, but every other part is reduced almost to the simplicity of the Tuscan.

The first order, consisting of piers with pilasters supporting their entablature, is tall, the second forms an attic also decorated with Corinthian pilasters of much smaller dimensions, over which springs the Cupola.

Whatever may be thought of the details the general effect and proportions are pleasing and harmonious.

On each side of the four arched recesses are marble doorways with walnut doors, in all eight in number. When shut, as they all resemble each other, it is impossible to observe which is the point of ingress or egress; some of them are merely decorative,

but as a door is not a decoration only, Michelangelo has introduced a false principle, which to this day has been harmful to architectural design. Above each door is a white marble niche, which however is designed like the exterior of a handsome window, and is as unsatisfactory, considered as part of an interior, as the false door beneath it.

Whilst the architecture of the Chapel is broad and massive, and simplicity is carried to excess, that of the monuments is small and complicated in the parts, and takes us back in its general proportions to the design of the preceding century. But these will be described in detail when their history is complete.

As the Chapel is now seen, it is to be remembered that it is not finished as Michelangelo designed it to be. The decorations of Giovanni da Udine will be adverted to under their proper date when executed. They have however been removed or whitewashed over. The alterations made in many edifices in Florence, after the great periods of art had passed away, have been deplorable, and are deeply lamented by the Florentines of the present day.

An overwhelming flood of bad taste, chiefly ecclesiastical, swept over Europe and injured hopelessly almost innumerable works of art. In a city so rich as Florence was and is in such works, the effects were disastrous in the extreme. All criticism therefore of this important architectural work of Michelangelo must be made with reserve, owing to the disfigurement which it has undergone at the hands of his countrymen.

The year 1526 closed darkly upon Michelangelo. The action brought by the heirs of Julius proceeded and destroyed his peace of mind. In a letter to Fattucci written in November he deplores his position and the evil disposition of the heirs towards him, which he admits was not without reason. « They demand »

said he « an amount of damages which would ruin a hundred such as I am. » « If » says he « the Pope should fail him he must cease to live, surely he will not permit his ruin and disgrace. His brain turned when he thought of these things. »[1]

Thus wrote Michelangelo, and under such circumstances as these, the nervous and sensitive artist continued his work for the monuments of the Medici, and produced the statue of Night, which is, apart from its place on the monument, expressive of the darkness and suffering which gathered round him and his country, and he also commenced that other wondrous statue of the Dawn, the countenance of which is so sad and hopeless.

It is to be lamented that only glimpses are caught of the progress of these great works and of the artist. His correspondence presents a blank. In the political events of the time, in the universal disquiet he ceased to complain. Appeals to the Pope on private interests, or with reference to the obstacles which beset him in the pursuit of his art, would indeed have been out of place, environed as the Pontiff himself was with perils which threatened his existence.

With the attention concentrated on the history of art and artists, on the height to which art had risen, and its wonderful achievements, there may be a tendency to forget the actual state of the Italian world. It might be supposed that with such fruits, a high civilization must have existed placing national life on a similar elevation, and that there must have been a natural growth of virtue and patriotism and national happiness. With too few exceptions it was precisely the reverse. Those who witnessed and admired the works of art and literature of which the age was so prolific, passed their lives whether public or private — whether as citizens taking a share in the govern-

[1] Buonarroti Archives, 1st November 1526.

ment of the State or in domestic pursuits — agitated by furious passions, or visited by all the miseries caused by civil dissension, by frequent wars, or by plagues springing from the vices and follies of governors and governed.

The cities, whose names are so famous, were torn and divided by the unscrupulous spirit of party, and these parties made furious by their hatred of each other — frequently springing from causes ridiculously inadequate to the disastrous results — ever in arms to attack or defend, and changing their modes of government under the guidance of evil passions and the desire of crushing opponents. Disgraceful policy prevailed in public and national affairs, whilst there was rarely found in any one, love of liberty or of patriotism.

If this age regarded from one side only was that of a revival, and the commencement of a new life in Italy, from the other it must be regarded as almost unparalleled in its corruption and debasement.[1] Cesare Balbo writing of the period between 1492 and 1559, which was that of the contest between Germany and France for dominion in Italy, says: « If leaving on one side the names of the rulers, we turn to that history so often neglected of the ruled, of the masses, of the humble, who are in fact the objects of government, if with the aid of the many records left of that age, we make ourselves acquainted with the communal and private condition of the Italians, we shall find transmitted from the governors to the governed, and given back by the latter such universal immorality, such imbecillity and perfidy, such vices, idleness, debasement and corruption as appear impossible in an age of christian enlightenment. »[2]

Whilst France and Germany contended for the dominion of Italy, incredible as it may seem, the Italians ranged themselves

[1] Aurelio Gotti, Life of Michelangelo.
[2] Thoughts on the history of Italy. Cesare Balbo, p. 57.

on the one side or the other, with the enemies of their independence, blind to every sentiment of dignity or freedom.

The Republics sacrificed freedom to servitude, that of Florence sank before the Medici, who, if they assisted to make her famous in the annals of literature and art, destroyed her liberties.

The siege and sack of Rome, the siege of Florence and the final ruin of her republican form of government are the two facts in the history of these two cities, in which are summed up all the horrors which resulted from the corruption of the Italians, and were the commencement of a servitude of long duration, from which they have only lately been freed.

The intelligence of the pillage of Rome reached Florence on the eleventh of May 1527, and the party adverse to the Medici, rose. Niccolò Capponi one of the most eminent of the Florentines together with Filippo Strozzi representing the liberal party, conveyed to the Cardinal of Cortona a resolution of the citizens convened in public meeting « that Hyppolitus and Alexander de' Medici should leave the city and consign the fortresses of the State into the hands of the popular party. » On the eighteenth of May the Medici with the Cardinal, left Florence with Strozzi for Pisa, but by mismanagement on his part, did not give up the fortresses and dexterously escaped from his charge.

After the departure of the Medici, the city was in great confusion from the usual divisions between opposing parties, but the moderate liberals prevailing, Capponi was appointed Gonfaloniere of Justice for a year.

The Republic entered into a league with the king of France, with England, the Venetians and Ferrara, but the internal affairs of the city were reduced to a deplorable state by famine and the breaking out of plague.

In 1528 the more furious of the democratic party were dissatisfied with Capponi; but, on the first of July, he was confirmed

in his office by the great Council of one thousand nine hundred and ninety-six citizens above twenty-four years of age. A prodigious religious fervour in the feverish state of the public mind had been excited by the preaching of the monks of St Mark in imitation of Savonarola, and they erected over the principal entrance of the Municipal palace that inscription in white marble, which is there now. YHS REX REGUM ET DOMINUS DOMINANTIUM. Notwithstanding this dedication, plague and famine prevailed, and one of the victims of the former was Buonarroto Buonarroti the best loved brother of Michelangelo, who fearlessly and tenderly nursed him during his fatal illness, Buonarroto dying in his arms on the second of July. It was wonderful that Michelangelo who never left his brother escaped the fatal infection.

There is no account of Michelangelo's work during these events that can be trusted. He was of the liberal party and his commissions for Clement were in abeyance. In August this year the Magistrates assigned him the block of marble which the Pope had given to Baccio Bandinelli for the group of Hercules and Cacus, of which Michelangelo was to form another of more patriotic idea, Sampson slaying a Philistine, for which he prepared a model, now in the museum of South Kensington London. The following are the terms of the commission which is dated the twenty-second of August 1528.

« Prefati excelsi domini et Vexillifer simul adunati. Desiring, that of a certain piece of marble now in the office of works, brought here about three years ago from Carrara, to make the image of Cacus, to be erected in a public place for the ornament of the city, that a beautiful statue should be made, by an artist excelling in such work, and knowing the unequalled skill and science, as well in painting as in sculpture of the remark-

able and unique possessor of these two arts, Michelangelo Buonarroti, their beloved citizen, they deliberated on their part, and having noted all that their Signories should note that the said marble, notwithstanding that it was formerly given to another ought now to be given and conceded, and so by the said resolution is given and conceded to the said Michelangelo Buonarroti, who is commissioned to make a figure united with another as may please the said Michelangelo, to be erected in such a place as this Signory may decide. The said Michelangelo ought as may be convenient to him, to commence the said statue by All Saints and should continue it till it is finished.»

This resolution of the Signory shows not only their confidence in the cause of Florence, but also their trust in the final success of that cause, it was a noble act at such a time.

In 1529 the more violent party gained the ascendancy and Capponi being deposed from his office, Francesco Carducci was elected Gonfaloniere on the seventeenth of April.

In the meanwhile the papal party was not idle, an agreement was entered into between the Pope and Charles V for the restoration of the Medici. The Emperor promised to give his natural daughter Margaret in marriage to Alexander « il Moro. » Under these circumstances all prospect of accomodation passed away and the Florentines prepared for their defence.

On the sixth of April 1529 Michelangelo was appointed by the Council of Nine to the direction of the fortifications, and the Council of Ten for war confirmed the appointment in the following terms. [1]« The Signory of Ten for war grant to Michelangelo Buonarroti, appointed as Director and Provider over the fortifications, thirty florins of gold as his payment for twenty days, commencing from the sixth of the current month, on which day

[1] Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani.

it was decided to proceed as follows with a provision of one golden florin per day, according to the tenour of his conduct. »

Thus Michelangelo by the will of his fellow citizens was suddenly transformed into a military engineer. Great indeed must have been the want of such officials, when an artist could thus be called from his studio to direct constructions of so peculiar a nature!

It might be supposed that the arts of attack and defence were in a very primitive state when such a course was possible, but at this time there existed in various parts of Italy strong and scientifically fortified places. Michele San Michele an architect towards the close of the preceding century was a celebrated military engineer. He was justly held to be the inventor of the modern system and built various strong places for the Venetian republic. The bastions of Ferrara were also famous. Profound therefore must have been the confidence of his fellow citizens in the skill and resources of Michelangelo, when in their hour of danger they could confide to him the direction of their much needed fortifications. What was thought of his operations as a military engineer is illustrated in an interesting manner by the remarks of a soldier, whose name is lost, but who wrote a brief narrative of the siege of Florence.

« At the same time they gave the charge of fortifying the city to Michelangelo Buonarroti, an excellent sculptor, painter and not less an architect; and to attract him to and to confirm him in favour of the popular party, knowing him to be a dependent of the Medici, they elected him one of the Council of Nine for the militia, who whether ambitious of honour, or for some other reason acted with ability and skill. He in the first place gave himself to the fortification of the hill of San Miniato and San Francesco, and as it appeared to him to be too great an expense to

how the design of the bastions, made up there by the Medici in the years 1527 and 1528, to include Giramonte, he commenced and bastioned at the first tower outside the gate of San Miniato towards San Giorgio, than which no better fortifications exist in our country; closing in the hill with admirable celerity by the hands of peasants under orders, forming the face of the walls of raw bricks made of pounded earth mixed with the coarse portions of flax, and the interior of the wall with fascines. Every edifice in the line of the walls was taken down, and so the city, but lately delivered from a terrible pestilence, that of the years 1527 and 1528, prepared itself to meet a great and perilous war. Some hold it to be an error of Michelangelo, the great number of flanks and the frequent embrasures, which owing to the nature of the ground, he had made in his defences; but if it was an error, and whichever is the greatest and most dangerous, either numerous flanks and embrasures, or few flanks and embrasures in fortresses, may most easily be explained by those who have knowledge of such things. But to know on which side or other should be offensive or defensive works, and what effect is produced in these by the flanks and embrasures is not the office of an architect, but of a brave and good practical soldier, who has not been a mere observer of fortresses, but a defender. If then he has not these qualities, the error lies in those who did not associate such men with him. But what can mere merchants know of war! which requires practice like all other arts, and the greater experience, inasmuch as it is so noble and dangerous.» [1]

This excellent and soldierlike letter is an interesting testimony to the great ability and pliable genius of Michelangelo. The wonder is not, that in some respects and as estimated by a soldier

[1] Breve Istorietta dell'Assedio di Firenze. Codice Magliabechiano, n. 622, class. xxv, car. 5-6

his defences should have been defective, but that he should have shown so much observation and acquired so much skill as to be able to fortify in any way.[1]

The bastions at San Miniato are still connected with the name of Michelangelo, but they do not show a trace of his method of structure as described in this letter. No fragment of those, running upwards from the gate of San Miniato now exists.

Amongst the archives of the Buonarroti, various records are preserved which refer to Michelangelo's military operations. The following is a letter from Niccholaio Dati who in the name of Giovanni Rinuccini presents to him ten workmen. It is dated the 31st March 1529:

« Magnifice Vir. This will be presented by the master mason Fabbriano Neretti with six companions also all mastermasons, all of whom desire to serve your Signory on the walls of your bastions. They are capable men and will not require to be watched over, and their work will be such to merit your praise, and tomorrow others will come making up the number of ten masters, which your worship requested me to send. On saturday I spoke of them to Giovanni Rinuccini your associate, and he told me to send them this morning to you from him, as the said Giovanni sent them to me, and I wished to speak to your Signory, but you did not come to the Palace, for they wish to be placed in a body altogether so that their work may be seen, would that it might please God that there were many of this sort.

Therefore I exhort you to show them a good countenance and to keep them, for their work will merit commendation. I spoke of them on friday to your Signory on the height, when I gave you my name that you might have some knowledge of me. I

[1] At a subsequent period Vauban made favourable remarks on the fortifications built by Michelangelo at San Miniato.

have written these few sentences as above by commission of Giovanni Rinuccini, and also because I wish that this people should be well served by intelligent men able to do honour to your Signory, to whom I recommend myself.

May Christ have you in his keeping. »

Yours

NICCHOLAIO DATI. [1]

Another note is dated 17th June 1529 and is as follows:

« I give notice to your Signory of the assignment of the first ditch above the road which goes to San Miniato, which is eighty five braccia long, thirty wide and sixteen deep. We, Giovan Battista and Lionardo Chiari, mastermasons and companions undertake to excavate it, and I oblige myself to execute the square braccio at the cost of three soldi four denari, the running braccio at thirty-nine livres. » That is, he would take out the square braccio at three half pence and a fraction, the running braccio including the width and depth of the fosse at thirty-nine livres. He adds: « Provided that your Signory supplies the tools to excavate with, that is six mattocks, eight shovels, two iron levers and two iron mallets. And the other part, that is the second ditch, we will execute in the same manner. » [2]

Other contracts for the fosses of the new works are preserved, but all are of similar character.

In the same month of April in which Michelangelo was appointed to his onerous and honourable charge, that unfortunate selection of a leader in Malatesta Baglioni was made by the Council of Ten, which brought such woe upon Florence, and had

[1] [2] Buonarroti Archives.

so singular an effect upon the fortunes of Michelangelo. He was not long in discovering that, however upright and patriotic his intentions, he must encounter opposition, and that he could not reckon upon the support of the Council which were divided in opinion, when union was so necessary to the safety of the state. His friend Capponi especially was opposed to fortifying the heights of San Miniato, and the contention between them became so sharp that they ceased to be friends. Giovanbattista Busini writing to Varchi after a conversation with Michelangelo says:

« It pleases me now to recount to you what was the cause. Niccolò (Capponi) whilst Gonfaloniere never wished that the hill of San Miniato should be fortified: Michelangelo who is a most truthful man says, that he had much trouble to persuade the other leaders, but that Capponi, he could never do so. However he began in the manner which you know with that refuse of flax, and Niccolò withdrew him from the work and sent him elsewhere; and when he was made of the Council of Nine, they sent him away two or three times, and every time that he returned he found the new works dismantled, and he complained loudly both on account of the office which he held and the injury done to his reputation. » [1]

He recommenced the works, so that on the arrival of the enemy they could be held.

In another letter of the same Busini dated 16th February 1549, he remarks: « Michelangelo says that neither Niccolò Capponi nor Messer Baldassarre wished to fortify the hill of San Miniato, but having persuaded all except Niccolò that it was well to have done so, and that it was undesirable to lose a day, the mount being so near the walls, and having commenced his walls with

[1] Busini. Letter to B. Varchi, 13th January 1549. Florence, Le Monnier, p. 103.

the pisé of earth and refuse of flax, which, to confess the truth, was not perfect and Michelangelo himself acknowledged it, it occurred to the Ten to send him to Ferrara to see the famous walls there. »

Michelangelo had previously been sent to Leghorn to advise about works of fortification for Pisa, to provide defences against overflows of the Arno, and now he was despatched to Ferrara, where he was received with great attention and every opportunity afforded him of studying the bastions. [1]

Besides his credentials to the Duke, Michelangelo was provided by the Council with a letter to the Florentine ambassador in the following terms, interesting as showing the high estimation in which he was held at the time:

Ferrariæ, die xxviii Giulii.

« Domino Galeottp Junio Oratori,

Magnifice Orator ecc. We send to Ferrara our celebrated Michelagnolo Buonarroti, as you are aware a man of rare endowments, for certain purposes which he will explain to you by word of mouth. We greatly desire that he should be recognized as a person highly esteemed by us and cherished as his merits deserve; and we commit to you that you make known in what

[1] About this time a gentleman of Bologna addressed Michelangelo through Fra Giovanni Pietro of Caravaggio a mutual friend, to request that he would design an altar piece which might be painted by Sebastian del Piombo. Matteo Malvezzi another friend wrote to him on the same subject.

« The composition according to his desire is to be this: His Signory wishes our Lady with the child in her arms, and four figures two on either side; the subjects of these figures and the attitudes and placements be such as shall please your Signory to make them. The picture to be semicircular at top, eight feet four inches and a half total height and five feet three inches and a half wide. A scale of our foot which is twelve inches is inclosed. The light is thus, the chapel is to the east and the light is south. » Buonarroti Archives.

This is an interesting practical letter. In July the same Friar wrote pressing the execution of the design and advising Michelangelo to quit the « noisy tumult of war » and to retire to Bologna where he would be kindly received in the house of Malvezzi or the Monastery of San Martino. This advice came within a few weeks of Michelangelo's actual retirement from Florence.

estimation Michelangelo is held by us, and that you introduce him to his Excellency the Duke, and do him all the favours which are in your power, arranging that he should be shown all things that it is necessary that he should see or understand, according to all that he may require, so that he may most conveniently execute our commission and may return well instructed in all that he has need to know. The which, granting for the benefit of the city, as much as possible we recommend that he should be satisfied. Bene vale.

Nota, the bearer of this is Michelangelo Buonarroti who is sent to Ferrara by the nine of the militia, to see the methods of fortification adopted by his Excellency the Duke; with whom you will do him all the favours in your power, as his high qualities and the interests of the city require, for the advantage of which he visits Ferrara.» [1]

The ambassador wrote to the Signory at Florence informing them of Michelangelo's arrival, which took place on the second of August, and lamenting that he would not take up his quarters with him, which he would have considered a great honour. On the fourth the ambassador accompanied Michelangelo round the city to inspect the walls, and presented him to the Duke who received him with the greatest courtesy and personally showed him the bastions, and whatever was of interest to him in the city.

At Florence the works on the fortifications were now pushed forward actively, as apparently more united councils prevailed. The return of Michelangelo was anxiously looked for, application had been made to the Signory that he should inspect the defences of Arezzo, and through the Ambassador at Ferrara he was pressed to return, the despatch bearing date the eighth of August.

[1] Printed by Gaye. V. II, p. 197.

The history of the events of the next few weeks becomes complicated. The time was approaching when Michelangelo took the unhappy resolution of abandoning his country and deserting the post which he held in her service.

It has generally been related that he fled to Venice in the company of Rinaldo Corsini, il Piloto and Antonio Mini, but documents lately discovered show that such, was not the case. He must have returned to his duties in Florence when earnestly pressed to do so by the Signory, and almost immediately must have again been despatched, this time to Venice, probably on a secret mission, and in company with the above mentioned persons. The following document from the Buonarroti Archives consisting of a portion of a letter and a note of accounts shows that he left Florence, went to Venice and staid there some days and returned before the date of his flight. The document is thus headed.

In Venice, this tenth of September.

« My honoured superior. [1]

Ten ducats to Rinaldo Corsini.

Five ducats to Messer Loredano for rent.

Seventeen lire, the breeches of Antonio.

A ducat, his boots.

Twenty soldi, a pair of shoes.

Two stools for sitting on, a dining table and a chest, half a ducat.

Eight soldi for straw.

Forty soldi, carriage of the bed.

Ten livres to the messenger who came from Florence (Bastiano the mason).

Three ducats from the Bondeno to Venice by boat.

[1] This was probably written towards the close of his visit. Beneath are the accounts.

Twenty soldi to Piloto, a pair of shoes.

Seven ducats from Florence to Bondeno.

Two shirts, five livres.

A cap and a hat, sixty soldi.

Fourteen days in Venice, twenty livres.

About four ducats for horses for Piloto, from Florence to Bondeno.» [1]

By these accounts it appears that Michelangelo had been fourteen days in Venice previously to the tenth of September. There are items which are calculated to mislead and but for the accidental precision of the date, the accounts might have been held to sustain the usual version of the history of Michelangelo's flight. For instance the payment to Bastiano who followed him on both occasions, the second time charged with his safe conduct granted by the Signory.

After the tenth of September, Michelangelo returned from Venice and resumed his direction of the fortifications. He had only been engaged thus for a few days when he suddenly resolved on that secret departure, the cause and consequences of which have been the subjects of so much debate. It has been seen that, in his efforts to serve his country, Michelangelo met with extraordinary opposition and was subjected to unprecedented mortifications; in his absences on duty his works were dismantled. At the time of his departure this had ceased, but he penetrated the projected treachery of Malatesta and tried in vain to open the eyes of the Gonfaloniere and the Council.

It was after these attempts upon his part and when he evidently dispaired of the cause to which he attached himself, that he was so singularly influenced, and not improbably fell the victim of a plot to bring about his departure, for he was an obstacle in the way of the conspirators, who were resolved upon

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

the destruction of Florentine liberty. He has himself written an account of what took place to his attached friend Battista Della Palla.

[1] « To my dear friend Battista Della Palla. Florence.

Battista dearest friend. I departed thence (from Florence) as I believe that you know to go to France, and I arrived in Venice.

I inquired as to the state of the roads and was informed that going by this place, it would be necessary to pass by German territory and that is both a dangerous and difficult road; therefore I have thought of learning from you when it pleases you, if you are still disposed to go and to pray you, as I thus do, to give me notice, and where you wish that I should wait for you, and we will go together.

I departed without saying a word to any of my friends and in much confusion; and although I, as you know, desired by all means to go to France, and had on several occasions asked leave without obtaining it; it was not however that I was not resolved, without fear of any kind, to see first the end of the war; but that on Tuesday morning on the twenty-first of September, there came one out by the gate of San Niccolò, where I was at the bastions, and privately told me that if I wished to save my life I ought not to stay; and he came with me to my house, and there dined, and then brought me horses, and did not leave me till he had me out of Florence, showing me that it was for my good. Or God or devil, whichever he may have been, I know not.

[1] This important letter is now deposited in the Buonarroti Archives, but it was purchased by the Italian Government, with several other documents for ten thousand francs. The system of the division of property prevalent in Italy leads to the dispersal of family Archives and collections. This letter fell to the share of a younger son was sold, disappeared, and has only lately been recovered to throw light on a momentous event in the history of Michelangelo.

Barisa amico mio &c. io partí dicosta
te p andare infrancia eguinco an
dena mia e cõ detto &h andado
tedesca e chiglie pricolo edificil
dere dauoi fessare quado mipracc
sta dandare epregarui e cosi mi
e dire uoi uolete che io uaspetti
Jo partí senza farmi detto a nessun
di sordinatamete ebeche io come
a auere ifrancia e che piu uolte
enõ auuca nõ eva po che io nõ
paura nessuna di uedere prima
ma martedí mattina a dí xemam
fuora della porta a sanichelo
choreschio midisse &h enõ eva da
la uita euenne meco a chasa e
ssemi chiamo catuve enõ mi l
difirenze mostrãdomi che io &
o leiemolo quello &h sisia sta
pregoui mirispõdiate adchisopr
presto potete p &h mi cõsumo
famcasia dadare acosa mi prego mem
ndare elmeglio potro damo

Vostro xm

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I beg that you will reply directly, as quickly as you can, for I am impatient to be gone; and if you no longer wish to go, pray let me know, so that I may adopt the best course to depart alone. »

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI.

It is a singular coincidence that on this occasion, as on that of his flight from Rome in 1506, the dread of assassination weighed so strongly on the mind of Michelangelo. To such an extent on the former occasion as to prevent his listening to all overtures for his return to Rome, and to such an extent this time as to induce him to leave Florence secretly on the evening of the 21st of September.

By his letter to Battista Della Palla it is evident that Michelangelo fled from Florence alone, after parting with his mysterious guide. This journey therefore must be separated from that other journey to Venice in the company of Rinaldo Corsini with which hitherto, it has been mixed up. His own account of his motives as subsequently related by him to Busini, are specially deserving of attention. Varchi narrates in the tenth book of his « Storie Fiorentine, » that Michelangelo having been interrogated in his name by Giovanbattista Busini answered: « Signor Mario Orsini had said to him one day in conversation, that he feared greatly that Malatesta had come to terms with the Pope, and would prove a traitor. Which thing he, as a loyal citizen and zealous for the well being of his country, immediately referred to the Signory. The Gonfaloniere Carduccio in reply took him to task as somewhat suspicious and timid and attached little importance to his revelation. Whence, he moved by this fear, or because Rinaldo Corsini did not cease to molest

him, to induce him to fly with him, as the city in a few hours, not days, would be in the power of the Medici, he had 12000 golden florins sewn into part of his dress, and with the said Rinaldo and with Antonio Mini his pupil, left Florence, not without difficulty, although he was one of the Council of Nine for the army, passing through the gate «alla Giustizia,» as likely to be least suspicious and as being least guarded.»

This statement of Busini, alleged to be on the authority of Michelangelo, is inconsistent with the letter lately found addressed to Battista Della Palla.

Nardi after stating that Michelangelo returned to his country knowing what need it had of him, adds: «Michelangelo and Rinaldo Corsini were of one mind, and for fear of the war absented themselves from Florence, as often happens from human weakness; but repenting they returned.»

This assertion that he departed from fear of the war, that is, as a coward, may at once be dismissed as inconsistent with his declaration to Palla and his conduct through life, during which he faced many dangers without shrinking; whatever the cause, it was not a base feeling of fear.

Busini gives a clearer account of the cause of this flight of Michelangelo, in his letter to Varchi of the 31st January 1549: « I asked Michelangelo what was the cause of his departure. He answered, that being one of the Nine, and the Florentine people being gathered within the walls and Malatesta and Signor Mario Orsini and other leaders, he then distributed the soldiers on the fortifications and assigned to each Captain his place, providing victuals, ammunition and eight pieces of artillery to Malatesta, who was to set a guard over them and to defend a portion of the bastion del Monte; he placed them (the guns) outside under the bastions without any guard. Mario did the contrary with that under his charge. Michelangelo, who as

magistrate and engineer superintended that part of the defences of the Monte, asked Signor Mario how it happened that Malatesta kept his artillery unguarded, to which Signor Mario replied « you know that he is of a family who have all been traitors and he also will betray this city. » This caused such apprehension to Michelangelo, that he felt constrained to depart. »

But before doing so Michelangelo in his place in the Council denounced the traitor, and pointed to the peril hanging over his country, and appealed in vain to her magistrates who were evidently quite unfitted for the posts which they held. With regard to the discrepancies between the two accounts, that is to say, that written at the time to Della Palla and that related years afterwards to Busini, the preference must be given to the first. Michelangelo himself confounded the two journeys to Venice. Other instances occur of forgetfulness such as this, which might happen to any one. He had no motive whatever for telling the tale differently and the second by no means improved his position.

Some of his obvious motives are altogether omitted in these statements. He had been for years in intimate relations with the Medici and employed by them, but he was a republican and a devoted adherent of the independence of Florence. When he believed that it was possible again to restore those liberties, he did not weigh his connection with the Medici with his duty to his country, nor had he any reason to do so. His forced and degrading labours for Leo did not merit his gratitude, his employment by Clement was marked by entire selfishness on the part of that Pope. Michelangelo's labour was compulsory, and his contracts with the heirs of Julius which he wished honourably to fulfil were trampled into the dust. He owed nothing to Clement. He saw his country by the Papal policy crushed under the domination of such wretches as Lorenzo and

Giuliano, and threatened with baser servitude to the bastard Alexander. Therefore he joined the liberators, but only to see divided councils, folly and treachery, to learn at last that there was no hope for his country, and that the time was at hand for her betrayal, when he must fall into the power of those, whom he had every reason to think could not forgive him for taking part against them, and he must remain without a friend to defend him from the power of the Della Rovere, who had been made his enemies spite of himself. He asked for his dismission, he insisted upon it, but in vain; he denounced the traitors, but in vain, and it was then that he was secretly informed that his destruction had been resolved upon and that his assassination was at hand. Under these circumstances, it can hardly be wondered at that he gave up the cause of Florence as hopeless. To die for his country was a duty from which he would not have shrunk if his death could have saved it; he was a man of courage and a sincere patriot, and sacrificed every consideration to his duty as a patriot, but his death would not have delayed the fate of Florence for one hour, especially his death by assassination, and having vainly protested against the conduct of affairs, and openly and boldly stated his reasons, he departed on finding his efforts useless.

Chapter XIV

The character and services of Michelangelo being held in such high esteem and his genius being so much admired by his fellow-citizens, his sudden departure caused a great sensation in Florence. To his enemies it was a source of satisfaction, whilst to his friends, who were far more numerous, it was the cause of consternation and sorrow. By whatever motives they were influenced, a considerable number of distinguished citizens also left Florence at the same time. The act of Michelangelo was therefore not a solitary instance, although it is now certain that he was accompanied by no one in his flight.

The Signory at once perceived the necessity of acting with promptitude and vigour; for its power was impaired by the protest against its government implied by the departure of important and well known citizens. On the thirtieth of September all were proclaimed rebels who had abandoned their country and had not obeyed the summons to return. The following is the ban which was published:

On reaching Ferrara, the Duke was informed of his arrival, and immediately sent his son meeting him with distinguished courtesy. He conducted Michelangelo through his collection of pictures, conversing with him of art and of the merits of the artists, and with a smile added: « You are my prisoner, and before you leave me, you must give me a promise to do something for me, either in painting or in sculpture, as you may prefer. » Michelangelo willingly gave his pledge, and it is said offered the Duke his inconvenient burden of capital in loan, an offer which however was not accepted, then bidding his Host farewell, he continued his journey to Venice. That he might escape notice there, he took up his quarters on the Giudecca. But one so illustrious and whom Venice had anxiously desired to enrol amongst her artists, could not long remain unnoticed and he was soon visited by a body of gentlemen deputed on the part of the authorities, who expressed their desire to treat him with the highest distinction. These attentions Michelangelo declined, his only object being to await the arrival of Della Palla, and thereon to continue his journey to France.

In the meanwhile Michelangelo's friends in Florence exerted themselves to obtain favourable terms for him and a safe conduct to enable him to return. Although his private property was not interfered with, as a matter of course his salary, as a public officer, was stopped. An attestation of this is preserved in the National Record office Florence:

« Declared by me Paul of Catignano, Treasurer of the Signory of the Eight of Affairs, that as under date of the 17th September 1529, there was appointed by the Magistracy of the Ten to Michelangelo Buonarroto, employed then as Governor and Procurator of the fortifications of the city of Florence, a salary of one florin of gold per day. That is, a salary of thirty broad

florins for thirty days, beginning on the tenth of August 1529 and ending the tenth of September following: and Michelangelo having the policy of the said allowance, which allowance it being necessary again to approve by the Signory's Colleagues of the Nine and Eight, according to the provision on allowances, was not approved, the said Michelangelo being absent from Florence without leave. »

A safe conduct was willingly granted, and the Council of Ten for War instructed the Florentine Ambassador at Ferrara, Galeotto Giugni, to use his influence to induce Michelangelo to return. Representations to the same effect were also made by his friends and were despatched with a copy of the safe conduct by a special messenger Bastiano di Francesco, a humble but devoted friend of the fugitive, charged also with a letter written by Giovanni Della Palla, who, as appears from Michelangelo's statements, intended to accompany him to France. He had however changed his mind and abandoned his project after his friend's departure, to whom he wrote as follows:

« To you, my most honoured Michelangelo,

Yesterday I sent you a letter of mine with ten others from friends, and a copy of the safeguard from the Signory, which is valid for November, as a precaution, although persuaded that the copy previously sent, must have reached you. I do not think it necessary to repeat on this occasion the arguments, which I have before so fully written on two sheets of paper, nor do I seek to induce friends to reiterate similar ones. All agree with one consent, and without doubt or hesitation urge, that so soon as you receive the safe conduct and their letters, you should return to your country and preserve it and your friends to you, as well as your honour and employments, and that you may

enjoy and benefit by those days which you have waited and longed for. Had any one predicted to me that I should have been able to bear the intelligence that an enemy was close to the gates of my native city without apprehension, I should have thought the prediction vain, but now I declare to you that not only am I without fear, but I am filled with high hopes of a glorious victory, and of such exaltation, that if some days hence, for some reason to us inscrutable, or for our sins, God in His judgment should not deliver this enemy into our hands, I should feel that sorrow which is experienced, not when we are disappointed of a hoped for benefit, but when we lose one already possessed, so entirely, filled with high hopes have I realized our certain victory.

Then looking forward for my country, I foresee in the discipline of the army, its future enduring safety and glory. I see permanent fortifications take the place of those of a temporary nature; the most difficult preliminary steps having been now taken by clearing the ground all round the city, for the country's safety not sparing even monasteries and churches. I see on the part of the citizens indifference to their losses and to the pleasures derived from their villas, and the prevalence of an admirable union and ardour for the preservation of liberty. No fear, but of God only, with confidence in Him and in the justice of their cause. I see innumerable other benefits, and a promise of renovation at least within.... [1] and a golden age, which I, and other of your friends, trust that you will enjoy.

Therefore again with earnest heart, and with as much as in me lies, I pray that you, whenever you receive this, will come, and take the way by Lucca, where inspired by the intense desire which I feel, that your country should not lose you, nor you your country, I have resolved to meet you, to bear you

[1] Obliterated in the original.

company in pleasant companionship, and to do all that is needful for you, till you are again here. If, when you arrive in Lucca, by some accident which in the mean time may have happened, you do not find me, and it does not appear to you well to come on, till I am with you bearing the safe conduct, be pleased to write a line to me, when I will instantly join you; being certain that leave will not be wanting to me to do so.

This proposal has occurred to me, since I wrote to you, if not for greater safety, at least for your better satisfaction. Good I wish you in no stinted measure, and you may see how I feel for your interests, when I can leave this city even for a day during the war, which is owing to my...[1] for love of you it will seem light. God preserve you in his goodness, and bring you back to your country safe and happy. »

From Florence this XXIIJ day of October.[2]

Entirely yours

BATTISTA DELLA PALLA.

Michelangelo set out for Florence, but his journey was delayed by obstacles on the road. The country was infested with troops of the enemy and by robber partizans, consequently he did not arrive in time to meet his friend at Lucca, who not being informed of the difficulties which he encountered, wrote to him again an earnest letter:

« Dearest friend.

After the XXI, kept till the XXII for the mason, I wrote to you by post on the XXIIII, by which letter, besides having confirmed the previous one, I promised you to be ready, for your satisfac-

[1] Obliterated in the original.
[2] Buonarroti Archives.

tion and security, to come here to accompany you to Florence, whenever you should call upon me to do so. On the XI of this month, I came here, so as to free your mind from any apprehension of the road, and I have remained either in Pisa or this place till this morning. But as you have not appeared, and as I have no news of you, and my leave of absence has nearly expired, I turn homewards, and I write this with my boots on and my foot in the stirrup. As I cannot persuade myself that you will not come, I inform you by this, in case you have not started, that the goods of those in your company, who are contumacious are already being sold, and if you do not come within the time fixed, that is within this month, as by the safe-conduct, the same thing will happen to your property without remedy. But if you come, as I firmly believe that you will, give notice to my honoured Messer Filippo Calandrini, to whom I have given a memorandum of my plan for conducting you in safety, so as to save you from thinking of it.

God preserve you from evil, and let us see you soon in your country, for her good cause victorious.»

Lucca, the XVIII day of November 1529.

«Remember me to Bruciolo, to whom I shall write from Florence with news of those of his house, who at my departure were excellently well.» [1]

To the much honoured Michelagnolo Buonarroti Simoni. In Venice, in the house of Bartolomeo Panciatichi.

Michelangelo reached Florence between the twentieth and the twenty-third of November. On the last of these dates the Si-

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

gnory altered the ban under which he was attached, to exclusion from the Council for three years, with permission however to petition for restitution each year.

No sooner had he returned than he resumed his post on the fortifications of the city. His biographers with their frequent exaggeration of events of trifling importance and omission of those of real interest, describe the damage done to the enemy by guns placed on the belfry of the church of San Miniato, and the effects of their return-fire, as well as Michelangelo's defence of the tower by surrounding it with bales of wool. This belfry, which still exists, measures eight feet square within the walls. If cannon were mounted in it they must have been mere pop-guns; nor does it appear possible that they could have been worked within so limited a space. The walls are very solid and on the summit there is a terrace which is provided with a low parapet on the cornice, of about twenty feet on a side, but the roof is within it, and there is no space for guns. The wool packs are described as an invention of Michelangelo. But they were frequently used in sieges and afforded an effectual resistance to artillery fire. They were extensively employed in the siege of Florence, the walls being in a very imperfect condition.

It is related that the enemy kept up so hot a fire that they seriously damaged the tower. Some chance shots have broken away portions of its angles but the church is quite uninjured. It is not the least likely that the artillerymen of those days, fired with such accuracy that they could confine their attentions exclusively to the belfry. It is more probable that a battery was formed close to it on the commanding height which it occupies, and this may have been called the belfry battery, and that the fire from the belfry itself was limited to small arms.

On Michelangelo's return he found that the spirit of the Florentines together with their patriotism and courage were admir-

able, and as he witnessed their conduct and the energy of the defence, it may be surmised that he deeply regretted that he should have despaired of the Republic, because he distrusted the capacity or honesty of some of the leaders.

A despatch to the Venetian government by its envoy Carlo Capello is an eloquent tribute to the behaviour of the besieged.

It is dated the twenty-ninth of October and was therefore written nearly a month before Michelangelo's return:

«Although this is the first time that this city has heard the sound of artillery near its walls, there is no one who does not show constancy, bravery and resolution to defend them. By the industry of the defenders they have been strengthened by one thousand eight hundred bales of wool, so as to have little to fear from the attacks of the enemy, which has more reason to apprehend defeat than to hope for victory. Besides eight thousand paid regular infantry in the city there are five thousand militia, composed of inhabitants between eighteen and fifty years of age, who neither spare themselves nor avoid fatigue by day or night whether on guard in the city on the walls or the bastions, doing duty with the troops, working at repairs or cutting fascines in their own farms outside the walls, making this sacrifice so as not to fail in their duty of defending the city. Of a truth they cannot be too much praised.

Nor is less diligence shown in endeavouring to obtain the Divine favour by acts of worship, by fasting, by communion, by processions in which all take part, including even the militia. A thing marvellous in these times, to hear of and to witness the use of arms united with the fear of God.

Within the city there is no disturbance or disorder. Money is abundant, and lately the palace and estate, where the Prince

(of Orange) lives at present, was sold with other property by order of the Signory, and the money was found as if it had been a time of peace.»[1]

The despatch of the Venetian Ambassador presents a noble picture of the struggle of a great and intelligent people for freedom.

During the progress of the siege glimpses are obtained of Michelangelo, engaged on the repair of the defences or otherwise discharging his military duties. With other Officers he ascended to the summit of the cupola of the Cathedral to observe the operations of the enemy on the twenty-second of February 1529. The Priors permitted this for once only.[2] Possibly they dreaded drawing the fire of the enemy on the noble edifice under their charge if they permitted it to be made a post of observation, nor was their conduct unpatriotic. The tower of the Palace of the Signory is nearly as tall, and at that time there were hundreds of lofty towers within the city suitable for such a purpose.

The Imperialists as they gathered round Florence took Lastra and Signa about six miles below it, and thus prevented the conveyance of supplies by the Arno. The city was completely invested in January 1530, and on the nineteenth of that month Hercules D' Este having failed to appear, Malatesta Baglioni was unhappily made Commander in chief.

The Florentines lost no opportunity of annoying the enemy, and performed daring feats of arms which, being isolated, produced no permanent results to their advantage. Religious enthusiasm was also increased by the preaching of two Dominican

[1] Albèri. Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneziani. Florence, 1839, Series 2d, v. 1, p. 238.

[2] An 1529 a' 22 di febbraio «Servatis servandis etc., deliberaverunt ex eorum auctoritate, quod Michelangelus de Buonarrotis, civis florentinus et architector, una cum duobus socils, possit ire in Cupola ad eius libitum, impune, et pro una vice tantum.» «La Cupola di Santa Maria del Fiore» by Cesare Guasti. Florence 1857 p. 130.

friars Benedetto da Fojano and Zaccaria da Fivizzano, who took the popular part and opposed the pretensions of the Medici.

The enemy was not inactive on his side. Besides cutting off supplies, he made direct attacks. The Prince of Orange assaulted the bastion of St George on the highest point of the walls, but was defeated with heavy loss. Had he been successful, the city could no longer have been defended. The Florentines in their turn compelled the unwilling and treacherous Malatesta to make a sortie, which owing to their courage was successful, when he suddenly ordered a retreat.

Whilst the Florentines were thus occupied with their defence, war pervaded the entire Tuscan territory. The brave officer Francesco Ferruccio who was in their service, subdued Volterra which had rebelled against the Republic, but Empoli was lost on the twenty-ninth of May by the treachery of his lieutenant Andrea Giugni.

The city of Florence was now nearly reduced to extremity by famine, and Malatesta negociated secretly with the enemy, whilst the citizens determined to destroy their families, to set fire to their dwellings and to perish rather than yield.

There was in this desperate position of affairs but one ray of hope. Ferruccio was ordered to attempt a diversion, and he marched upon Pisa with three thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry where suddenly prostrated by illness, he was unable for some time to move; hardly had he recovered, when he entered the mountain recesses above Pistoja with his troops.

The Prince of Orange detached so large a force from his besieging army to meet Ferruccio, as to leave only four thousand men before Florence, whom Malatesta, ever faithless to duty, omitted to attack although urged to do so. He had secretly arranged with Orange not to take the offensive if he forwarded troops to attack Ferruccio.

As the brave and loyal Ferruccio with the forlorn hope of the Florentines entered the mountain town of San Marcello which he took by assault, he was met by the Imperialists under Orange who had arrived at Gavignano on the other side. In the combat which ensued Orange was killed, Ferruccio taken prisoner, and the Florentine troops over matched, were disastrously defeated. Their brave leader was led unarmed into the presence of Fabrizio Maramaldo a Calabrese serving the Imperialists, who ordered him to be put to death. With Ferruccio died the last hope of the Florentine Republic.

The mercantile community of Florence in the days of its freedom and prosperity, had not prepared for the exigencies of possible war. When its liberties were threatened from within by citizens of its own, and conspirators like the Medici were punished as they so well deserved by expulsion, they sought foreign aid to replace them and brought frightful calamities on their ill prepared country. It is obvious from the letter of Della Palla to Michelangelo that Florentine opinion had at last awakened to the necessity of maintaining a regular army, if the liberty of the republic was to be preserved. The results of the absence of all military preparation are observable in singular and disadvantageous forms. An artist was called from his studio to fortify the city. The high post of commander in chief was conferred upon a partizan leader of notoriously unsafe character, and the safety of the Republic came to depend upon the conduct and bravery of one officer only, so that, when Ferruccio was ill at Pisa, there was no commander who could take his place. The Republic was so weak in reality, that she lost by force or treachery Pietrasanta, Motrone, Pistoja, Empoli, Prato and Volterra, the last city being retaken by Ferruccio.

Both Della Palla and the Venetian Ambassador testify to the patriotism and heroic courage of the Florentines, and to the

number of combatants assembled within the walls, partly militia partly hired troops, yet Florence fell before her enemies, although eight thousand citizens and fourteen thousand soldiers were sacrificed. Bravery and endurance, unsurpassed in history, did not suffice to save the Republic in the absence of military preparation and organization, whilst trust in hireling leaders proved fatal.

Malatesta's treacherous and cowardly refusal to attack the camp of the besiegers after the departure of so large a portion of them to meet Ferruccio, drove the Signory to decided action. They deprived him of his command, but he stabbed the official who brought him their order and turned the guns of the Roman gate upon the city. Divided councils, and the declaration of partizans in favour of the Medici necessitated submission; and terms were made on the twelfth of August with Ferrante Gonzaga now Commander of the Imperial forces, and Baccio Valori Commissioner of the Pope. It was agreed that the future form of government should be determined by the Emperor, it being however understood that liberty should be preserved.

A general amnesty was declared and Florence opened her gates. Terrible was its state and that of its citizens, impoverished by the war, many reduced to a state of misery, all filled with grief and mortification and scourged by the plague, which broke out with renewed force after the capitulation, finding new victims amongst the imperialists.

The Medici were restored on the ruin of the liberties of their country, they disregarded the conditions of surrender and persecution and bloodshed commenced. Michelangelo was diligently sought for, and had he been taken in those first days of vindictive triumph, this great light would have been quenched, but he found a secret and safe asylum in a friend's house. Amongst the accusations brought against him it was said that he had

proposed to level with the ground that palace of the Medici in which he had been so hospitably entertained, and that he had proposed to call its vacant site «the place of mules!»[1]

With the lapse of time, better feelings assumed their ascendancy. Pope Clement called to remembrance his noble qualities, as well as the works which he alone was competent to finish. He had complained of and blamed Michelangelo's adherance to the national party, but he now caused a report to be spread that he would pardon the great artist. The report was soon conveyed to Michelangelo and he must have been convinced of its good faith for he returned to his studio and resumed his work.

However occupied by his novel military duties, excited by their responsible nature, or by his mixture with politicians; however agitated by his hopes for his country or his dread of the power of her enemies; whilst engaged in combats in an arena so new to his experience, discussing with or persuading his colleagues, and at the same time as appears even by the little that remains of his correspondence, transacting a great amount of business; still he found time for the exercise of his art.

This industry of Michelangelo during the progress of the siege, this devotion of a part of his time to the fulfilment of his engagements and the practice of his profession, manifest upon his part, a self possession and calmness of spirit entirely inconsistent with the idea that fear induced him to leave Florence. He passed from the walls and from combat, from his duty of watching the enemy, of repairing the defences where injured, from his functions as a statesman and councillor, to the quiet of his study where he was engaged in painting his picture of Leda.

Michelangelo is said to have executed this work in tempera, a singular circumstance when it is remembered how well he

[1] Varchi. V. II, p. 399.

could paint in oil, and that there is no process more ill adapted for representing the nude than tempera painting, as may be seen by innumerable specimens of the Tuscan School. At this time also (1529) the art may be said to have disappeared, oil painting having entirely taken its place.

The picture was executed in fulfilment of the pledge given to the Duke of Ferrara, who sent an agent to claim it. He is described as an ignorant and pitiful fellow, but it is unlikely that the Duke would have selected such a one.

When he saw the picture he was surprised, as well he might be, by the selection of the subject and the gross manner in which it is represented. He asked with surprise, if that was the picture for his master, and hot words passed between him and the artist. The story, meant to be to his discredit, does him honour. The irritated Michelangelo told him to leave his presence.

Vasari then goes on to relate that at the request of his pupil Antonio Mini, who had two sisters to bestow in marriage and needed dowries, Michelangelo presented him with the picture as well as with various Cartoons for other sketches and models. The great artist was perfectly aware of the value of his productions, and that he should have acted in this reckless way is not to be believed, being wholly inconsistent with his character for good sense.

Michelangelo did not, it may well be supposed, throw away his works, like a mere spendthrift, under the influence of momentary agitation. Having refused the picture, certainly unreasonably, to his courteous friend the Duke of Ferrara, it is probable that he sought another purchaser. This view of the case is supported by documents in the Buonarroti Archives which rather point to Mini as a shareholder by purchase, and to an advance of money made on the picture by another Florentine.

A certain Francesco Tedaldi wrote from Lyons to Michelangelo on the eleventh of February 1532 informing him, that Antonio Mini and Benedetto del Bene had arrived there and expected the picture of Leda to follow:

« They await the Leda and so soon as it arrives they will go to court: to which place I am not going, but I shall write to friends, and I shall give them letters of favour and recommendation, so that nothing will be wanting to them. They have begun a Leda which turns out very beautiful; and this Benedetto has a refined spirit: I am of the mind that they will make her beautiful, if it please God.

This was a copy by Benedetto del Bene and the tone of mind of the time is illustrated by the concluding pious phrase in allusion to a duplication of a picture, which was so offensive. It is made evident by this letter, that the object of Mini in visiting France, was to sell the picture to the King, and it would hardly have been written to Michelangelo had he not been interested in the transaction. It is to be presumed that the copy was made with his consent, as it is so frankly alluded to.

The second document is very prolix. It is dated Lyons the first of July and was written for the information of his heirs by Tedaldi.

It states that Antonio Mini in August 1532 conveyed to Paris the two pictures of Leda and deposited them in the house of Giuliano Buonaccorsi, and that the writer Tedaldi was owner of one half share of the original picture by Michelangelo, for which he had paid a sum equivalent to about seventy pounds Stg,[1] and further that he had expended besides a sum exceeding one hundred and fifty pounds Stg.[2] Mini having left the pictures

[1] One hundred and forty ducats.
[2] Two hundred and ten ducats.

for a year with Buonaccorso, claimed them, when the latter denied that he had received them from him but that they had been deposited in his house by Messer Luigi Alamanni by desire of the king. The result of this nefarious attempt on the part of Buonaccorsi was an appeal to the law with affidavits on both sides. Tedaldi interfered in his turn being pecuniarily interested, and obtained from Luigi Alamanni a written statement that he had not deposited the pictures with Buonaccorso. It does not exactly appear how the original by Michelangelo passed into the hands of the King. The last lines of the record are: « And let him note who may make use of this record, that this Leda was not worth less than one thousand ducats, for here in Lyons we could obtain upon its security five hundred ducats from Leonardo Spina and five hundred from Tommasino Guadagni. The said Buonaccorsi must show what commission he had from Mini as to the said Leda, and how Messer Luigi Alamanni took it or caused it to be taken to his house at the desire of the King: which he cannot do; as we have letters of his to the contrary, also how the king had demanded it of him or caused it to be taken by absolute power. Many persons say that he made a gift of it to the King and had a great recompense: one Secretary says that it is worth two thousand ducats, others that it is worth much more.»[1]

It appears that Buonaccorsi so completely succeeded in circumventing Mini, that he disposed of the picture to the King, and it is to be presumed received its value. Tedaldi who had purchased a half share in it from Michelangelo and undertaken part of the cost of its transport to the court of France, having lost his venture by the weakness or folly of Mini the other shareholder, brought a claim against his heirs or left it to his own to do so.

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

The picture of Leda was preserved at Fontainebleau till the reign of Louis XIII when Des Noyers superintendent of the Royal palaces, — from it is said conscientious scruples, — caused it to be burnt; others say that he injured it, and that it was restored as best could be, and was taken to England.[1]

Besides painting the Leda during the time of the siege Vasari says that Michelangelo « secretly worked at the sepulchres of the Medici, » but Condivi alleges that he returned to them after the city was taken, under the influence of fear, again fear! this oft repeated word of his biographers, who either attached no sense of shame to it, or slandered their hero. Condivi adds that he worked rapidly which was the more remarkable « that for fifteen years he had not touched a chisel. » The extravagance or utter carelessness of this statement goes far to destroy the importance of the other, that he only returned to his work on the sepulchres after the fall of the city, were it not that an examination of Vasari's counter evidence, cannot fail to show its worthlessness. Vasari is not ashamed to publish the slanderous report that Michelangelo whilst serving the Republic in offices of high trust, and doing all that lay in his power to promote her defence and to defeat the Medici « secretly worked » at the monuments of two of the most odious of these tyrants. He could not fail to know that if the republican party was successful, as he honestly hoped that it would be, the monuments of the Medici never would be erected. The assertion that he « secretly worked » is so depreciatory of his character for honour and consistency, that it amounts to a worse accusation than, that he fled from Florence from fear of the approaching siege. There is this further consideration that whilst he is thus

[1] In June 1853 the Journal « La Presse » announced that a certain M. J. Baïssas had discovered a copy or rather reproduction of this famous Leda. The beauty of which induced it to be believed that it was painted under the direction of Michelangelo. This picture may well be the copy by Del Bene described by Tedaldi as so beautiful.

represented as «secretly working» for the enemy of the Republic which he was apparently serving with so much patriotic feeling and such entire devotion. A block of marble originally destined for his workmanship, had been given by Pope Clement to Bandinelli as Michelangelo was too busy to undertake it. Bandinelli having deserted Florence preferring the papal service to the claims of his country, the great block, as has been already mentioned, was publicly assigned to Michelangelo by the Signory on the twenty-second of August 1528, and his choice of a subject full of patriotic feeling, Sampson the deliverer smiting a Philistine, was the open avowal of his sentiments and the public employment of his art.

In the sight of all men he made a model for the proposed group. If it be alleged that he felt an irresistable desire to return to his chisel, the opportunity of doing so in the face of day was provided. It may certainly be assumed, that if the employment of his time in the service of his country and other causes easily imagined, prevented him commencing the group of Sampson and the Philistine, he never touched the monuments of the Medici, and the first part of Condivi's assertion that he only did so when the siege was over may therefore be considered trustworthy.

On the restoration of the Medici, the block of marble was again given over to Bandinelli who shaped it into that hideous Hercules overcoming the robber Cacus, which ever since has disfigured the Piazza of the Signory. Baccio Bandinelli's hatred of Michelangelo, and insane belief that he was his equal in ability, have been sufficiently described in many pages. His works in Florence have made his name familiar by their vulgarity and obtrusiveness, and his pretentious rivalry of Michelangelo has served as an advertisement of an artist whose proper fate was obscurity. He is popularly, but probably very

unfairly associated, with a robbery of Michelangelo's studio, thus described in a record supposed to have been written by Antonio Mini:

« Three months before the siege, Michelangelo's work shop in Via Mozza, was broken into with chisels, and about fifty drawings of figures, and amongst these the designs of the sepulchres of the Medici and many designs of great value, and four models in wax were taken away. And the young men left behind them inadvertently an iron, which was inscribed with an M. and this it was that betrayed them. So soon as they were discovered, they escaped or hid themselves, and sent to say that they would return the designs and models and asked forgiveness. »[1]

It is asserted that the chisel marked with the letter M. belonged to Michelangelo the father of Baccio Bandinelli; but that is no proof that Baccio therefore took part in this robbery, perpetrated in all probability by working sculptors from different work shops, amongst whom there may have been one from the establishment of the elder Bandinelli.

From the same collection of documents we learn, that commissions were pressed upon Michelangelo, which, occupied as he then was, he was unable to accept. They serve to show the high estimation in which he was held and the wide spread desire existing to possess works by his hands or even sketches to be executed by other artists.

A Bolognese gentleman entreated that he would make a design for a picture, apparently for a Church, to be coloured by Sebastian del Piombo, and availed himself of the services of Fra Giovan Pietro da Caravaggio, Prior of St Martins in Bo-

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

logna. A certain Matteo Malvezzi also wrote to him. The letter is without signature, but is interesting as showing the combination of courtesy and good sense with which commissions were offered:

« The idea of the gentleman is this. His Signory wishes a picture of our Lady with the child in her arms and four figures, two on each side of our Lady; the which figures to be selected by your Signory as appears best to you as well as the attitudes and positions of the figures. The picture is to be semicircular at the top, its height eight feet four inches and its width five feet three and a half inches according to our measure, which is drawn in this sheet, that is to say a foot of twelve inches. The light in the Chapel is thus, it stands east and west and the light will be south. »

Michelangelo being otherwise occupied was unable to execute this commission, which there is reason to believe was offered when he was engaged with the defence of Florence.

Before the memorable seige, Ludovico Buonarroti de Simoni was sent in 1529 as Podestà to Castelfranco, but the weak old man deserted his post on the approach towards Florence of the Imperial army and went to Pisa. After the surrender of Florence wishing to return to Florence he wrote to his sons. The correspondence is of little interest, but Leonardo the son of Buonarroto and the nephew and heir of Michelangelo, to whom he subsequently wrote many letters and whom he provided for, appears for the first time.

Gismondo wrote to his father that when the roads were safe he would come for him, thus apparently notwithstanding the disturbed state of the country, there were means of correspondence. The letter thus concludes:

«We are all well; for which we may thank God, having been in so many troubles and being so still. Thank God that you were not and are not here, for we are still in great want of bread, which there is not; however cheese, dried meat and oxen have begun to come in.... There are some cases of plague; however we hope things will go well. Rest in peace and when it is time to come for you, we shall not fail.»[1]

As Gismondo delayed, Lodovico wrote to Michelangelo: «Some time since I wrote to Gismondo: from whom you must have heard of my residence here; it has been too long; whether it be from the departure of the pure soul of Buonarroto, or whether from my desire to return, or because Nardo every day suffers more from living here, having become unhealthy and unhappy, I fear for him. Gismondo said he would come to my help so soon as the roads were secure, but he has not, and I have no news: my impatience and annoyance increase, and he being Castellan of Verruca, I do not know the cause.»[2] He then goes on to say that he would set out, and, no doubt, did so and returned to Florence, where his son Michelangelo was busily engaged with his work in San Lorenzo.

At this time he undertook one work in addition to those in progress for Pope Clement, a statue rather under life size for Baccio Valori, whose friendship he wished to conciliate. The subject selected was a youthful Apollo drawing an arrow from his quiver, but the statue was not finished, for Michelangelo found even this, in addition to his other work, too much for him, in the state of health in which he was after the siege.

It shows his method of working, every part of it being carried equally so far that his next process would have been to complete

[1] [2] Buonarroti Archives.

it, still the details of the forms are merely indicated, but they show, in a wonderful way, the freedom and certainty of his touch and how plastic marble was in his hands.

Artists of genius convey to the mind suggestions of beautiful form and variety of expression, by a few lines or touches with the point on canvas or paper, or with the modelling tool in pliable clay or wax, the materials lending themselves to rapid manipulation whilst inspiration lasts, and such sketches by master hands have an indefinable, but exquisite charm. That the hard marble which must have been returned to again and again for many days, before this Apollo was shaped, should be entirely free from any appearance of labour, and should present the same evidence of facility confidence and power, in the sure and rapid expression of thought, is very wonderful, and makes this unfinished statue very precious in its present condition.

Chapter XV

Having seen the hopelessness of the Florentine cause, Michelangelo submitted to the inevitable. His name is associated for ever with the glorious defence which was made of the liberties of his country, and the eagerness with which he was sought for by her enemies is a tribute to the value of his services at that momentous and unhappy time.

Pope Clement having treated him with favour, Michelangelo considered himself exclusively in his service and made no advances, and offered no respect to the vicious and paltry Alexander the Moor, who was made Duke of Florence. He avoided him even when his services were asked for, refusing to take any part in the proposed erection of a fortress, not so much meant to defend as to dominate Florence, and he consequently incurred the Duke's dislike; but his employment by Clement shielded him and he pursued his work in the Sacristy of San Lorenzo in safety. It has been seen in the course of his history how at times Michelangelo vanished from observation. When

the doors of the Sixtine closed upon him and he pursued his work silently and industriously, his biographers filled the gap with inventions based on idle gossip, and it is only from his letters preserved by his descendants, or by the careful examination of his works that we learn how he was occupied and what were his thoughts.

When at work at Florence living near his family he had no motive for writing those familiar letters to its members which throw so much light at other times upon his occupations. He had important reasons for avoiding observation amongst which, owing to the part which he had lately taken, was the enmity of the ruler of Florence and of his partizans whom he had opposed. In his biographies there has been little trace of him in 1531, but now it is otherwise. It was a busy eventful year. In it he carried to its completion that beautiful statue of the « Dawn » which rests on the tomb of Lorenzo. The statue of « Night » with its woful meaning, might have afforded him more congenial employment, but that grand creation was already finished.

When Michelangelo again resumed his work on the monuments, he continued it without serious interruption till the death of Clement. A brief retrospect of dates may be useful at this period of their history. The order for the commencement of the new Sacristy, or Chapel of the Medici, as it is now called, was issued by Leo X in March 1520, that it might contain « the sepulchres of Giuliano, his brother, and of the Duke Lorenzo, his nephew, both dead; it was also said that Messer Julio, Archbishop of Florence and Cardinal, desired it to be made for himself also. »[1]

It has been seen that, as the walls arose, Michelangelo carried on the architectural back-grounds of the monuments, and other

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

decorative parts of the interior, which are of Carrara marble, all, according to the opinion of an expert, from the quarry of the Polvaccio. That at the same time he was making progress with the statues, is shown by the following documents. In 1524 on the nineteenth of October he acknowledged to have « received four hundred ducats on account of his salary at fifty ducats a month, »[1] for the execution of the Statues for « the sepulchres in the new Sacristy of San Lorenzo. » It appears therefore that he commenced the statues of the tombs of the Medici in February 1524.

On the twenty-fourth of October 1525 Michelangelo thus wrote to Messer Giovanni Fattucci: « In reply to your last, the four figures blocked out are not yet finished and there is a great deal to do to them. The four others to represent rivers have not been begun because there is no marble. » Another interesting letter also preserved in the Buonarroti Archives gives a detailed account of the progress of the works.

Florence, April 1526.

« Messer Giovanni Francesco. Next week I shall have the figures which are blocked out in the Sacristy covered up, as I mean to leave it free to the marble cutters to build up the other monument opposite that already built, and whilst they are building, the dome may be made. I think that with a great number of workmen, it may be done in three months, but I have no experience.

After next week our Lord may at his convenience send Master Giovanni da Udine, if he thinks it right for I shall be ready.

Within this week, four columns[2] have been built up, one having been so previously. They will delay somewhat the ta-

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

[2] The Corinthian columns within the Chapel.

bernacles, but I think that they will be finished in four months from to day. The scaffold would be begun at once but the Linden wood is not yet seasoned, it will be hastened as much as possible.

I work as hard as I can and in fifteen days I shall begin the other Captain, then there will only remain of consequence the four rivers. The four figures on the Sarcophagi, the four figures on the ground which are rivers, the two Captains [1] and our Lady for the sepulchre at the head of the Chapel, are those which I wish to do with my own hands, and of these I have begun six, and I have courage to execute them within a reasonable time, and to have the others done in part which are of less importance. »

Thus then Michelangelo's work in the Medici Chapel was considerably advanced in 1526. The tabernacle of one monument was complete, the other about to be begun, the marbles having been wrought. He was about to build his first cupola and acknowledges that practically he wanted experience. It was however his first lesson in domical construction and no doubt the experience gained was turned to account when in his turn be became Architect of St Peters.

Why Giovanni da Udine was summoned is not clear, unless it was that he might have an opportunity of studying the edifice which he was to decorate.

Other casual notices indicate that he continued his work, till in 1527, Florence declared for liberty and the Medici fled. In November 1530 he resumed his work upon these statues and continued it, till the death of Clement in 1534. But this is to

[1] Lorenzo and Giuliano. A fine sketch in clay of the figure of a river is in the possession of the Cav. Santarelli Sculptor and is thought to be one of the studies prepared by Michelangelo.

anticipate. Whilst so occupied, unfortunately the old questions and accusations regarding the Monument of Julius were revived. Complaints of his nonfulfilment of his contract were renewed at Rome by the Duke of Urbino, and of this Michelangelo was soon informed, the intelligence producing as usual great excitement of mind, so much so, that early in January he was bent upon leaving his work and going to Rome to meet his accusers face to face.

A special provision had been made by the Pope for his ready and convenient access to the Vatican without entering Rome, and a room was kept for him. But after all he did not set out, but remained in Florence.

The Pope showed himself to be very desirous of composing the differences between Michelangelo and the Duke of Urbino, and in his absence conferred with Sebastian del Piombo on the means of attaining this object. The letters from Michelangelo in reply to those of Sebastian do not exist, but the latter show what was their nature, as well as what Pope Clement did to assist and soothe the great artist, knowing that he could not work, when alarmed or irritated. The following letter is expressive of the Pope's sentiments, and is dated Rome 29th April 1531, when apparently Michelangelo still entertained the wish to go there:

«My dearest friend. It does not follow from what Menichella[1] said to me that you should suspect any one, or that you should take the road to Rome on account of wrongs done to you: a letter to your friend (the Pope) will be enough, you will see what the fruit of it will be, for I know how much he reckons upon you. I believe that if you will make a statue in your

[1] Domenico da Terranova called Menichella an indifferent painter, whom Michelangelo assisted with designs, and whose absurdities afforded him great amusement.

own manner and by your own hand, you could not do a better thing for your own advantage; for he loves you, knows you, and adores your works, appreciating them as much as any one ever did; a source of great happiness to an artist. He speaks of you in the most honourable terms, and with such regard that a father could not say more of a son, than he says of you. True it is that at one time he was grieved by some idle reports, which reached his ears during the siege of Florence; he shrugged his shoulders and said: « Michelangiolo was wrong. I never did him an injury. » Therefore, my dear friend, learn to know him, and take things the right way, and be of good cheer, for he is aware of the labour which you undergo for him, and that you work even at night, so that he is highly pleased: however he would be still more pleased if he knew that you were happy, and that your mind was at peace, and that you had the same love for him, that he has for you.

Pardon me, my dear friend, if I speak too frankly; the love which I have for you, prompts me to say what I say.

I wish that by some other means, than by painting and sculpture alone, you would show that you are his servant, and so you would cut the ground from under the feet of your enemies; and thus you would play an independent part.

Now, one favour I would ask of you; that you should estimate yourself rightly and do not be roused to anger by every trifle, and remember that the eagle does not deign to notice the fly; enough if you smile at my garrulity. I do not mind it, for so nature made me, and I am not a Zuan da Rezzo. »[1]

This letter shows at once the strength and the weakness of Michelangelo. It is not quite apparent what Sebastian means, when he says: « if you will make a statue in your own manner

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

and by your own hand» in as much, as this was precisely what he was then doing, working «even at night.» The allusion to Clement's view of Michelangelo's conduct in siding against the Medici is very significant; an attempt to make that a mere personal question, which in reality stood on much higher ground, and further on, the effort to persuade him to adopt a course of conduct, which would mark him a partizan of the papal party, show how entirely Michelangelo separated the two questions of his employment as an artist and the independence of his political opinions. The letter also indicates that the persecution from which he suffered, was partly or rather in a great measure political. He returned to his work on the tombs of the Medici, but he avoided any act inconsistent with the part which he had taken in favour of republican liberty.

The soothing tone of the letter the « fooling him to the top of his bent » shows his undignified irritability and what was thought of it by friends and contemporaries.

Sebastian del Piombo had occasion to visit Pesaro, and there he met Girolamo Genga, a painter of repute, who lived with the Duke of Urbino. From him Sebastian learnt that the question of the monument of Julius might be amicably settled and the Duke satisfied, and that he was prepared to provide the eight thousand ducats needful for completing it. This was a step in advance, for hitherto the Duke and his friends were apparently persuaded that Michelangelo had been paid the entire sum of the cost, which was an entire misapprehension on their part.

Sebastian immediately wrote to inform Michelangelo, who addressed the Pope, but again in a tone of complaint in his unhappily too frequent style. This letter he desired Sebastian to put into the Pope's hands, with another referring to the monument also for the consideration of His Holiness. By Sebastian's reply the nature of these letters may be surmised:

16th June 1531.

« My Dear Friend,

I have received yours in reply to mine, with a letter inclosed, directed to our Lord; which I placed in his hands, and he received it with pleasure: and moreover he wished to see that, which you had written to me. He wonders greatly, and is very sorry that you give any weight to the idle talk of those, who, when at a loss for subjects to amuse His Holiness, talk about Michelangelo and his affairs and pretend to have a knowledge of art, but utter such nonsense, as would make stones laugh. But God be thanked, His Holiness knows them so well, that he seems to hear them with my ears; and values them precisely as we do: and I firmly believe that you could not find in the whole world a man so entirely your friend as His Holiness....[1] He was surprised, when he read your letter in my presence, that the statues which you mention, are finished,[2] and he said that never was there such a worker as you are when you choose; very different from the idle talk of enemies. Then he called me on one side and told me to write to you that you should take the work easily, doing what you can, but not so as to affect your health, or to bring some illness upon you. That you should go out and take the air sometimes, and many other such words showing how he loves you....

With regard to the monument of Julius, our Lord has read my letter, and has again read the headings of the contract which I gave you from the Duke of Urbino, and he desires that I should tell you that he has spoken of this affair. I told His Holiness everything, and besought him to favour and assist you and so to give you back twenty-five years of life. He answered me

[1] Followed by more in the same tone.
[2] The Figures of Night and Dawn.

kindly that he would do it willingly; and told me that I should write nothing to the Duke without first understanding your wishes, as to how you would settle this affair; and also to make it known to His Holiness, so that he may judge what to offer on your part to the agents or to the ambassador of the Duke of Urbino.»[1]

Sebastian then goes on in his prolix way to express his hope of the good effects of the Pope's interference, assuring Michelangelo that nothing will be done without his consent. He also describes the miserable state of his house in Rome and the bad conduct of his agent «who is wasting the property, which it will take many ducats to repair.» In his next letter to Michelangelo, Sebastian details the progress of his negotiations with the agents of the Duke of Urbino:

Rome, 22d July 1531.

«Dearest Friend. Do not be surprised that I have not replied more promptly to your last letter which I received at the end of last month, by which you instruct me in what I have to do and propose to the agents of the Duke of Urbino. Not to disobey the command of our Lord I showed him your letter, which he read carefully, and so understood what you desire. He was surprised that you should so unreservedly offer two thousand ducats, and the house in which to finish the work of the monument of Julius, in the term of three years; it is too great an offer and two disadvantageous to you. I believe that it would grieve you much to see three thousand ducats[2] pass out of your possession. My friend, by order of the Pope I inform you that His Holiness is not satisfied with this offer, and he does not wish

[1] Buonarroti Archives.
[2] Including the value of the house.

me to propose so much at first; but has commissioned me to speak to the Ambassador of the Duke and to Messer Hieronimo Ostacoli as proceeding from myself in consequence of the statements of Hieronimo da Zenga, and that I should see what they have to say, when I could refer their answer to you. I have done so. I went to the Ambassadors and by chance found there Hieronimo Ostacoli, and as from myself narrated every thing; and said every thing to them which I thought beneficial. And I pointed out the alternatives, whether to execute all the work or to diminish it, nor did I offer a farthing; towards it, I found the Ambassador disposed to be well satisfied and favourable: and as to him we may do what we wish with him. But I found Messer Hieronimo Ostacoli rather bold and, he said, «I know much better than you do what Michelangelo wants.» And he said to me: Michelangelo wants to sell the house, and having the money, then to reduce the work and finish it in his own way; which is not honest. He has had ten thousand ducats; he began with these and it was seen that the work went on: and towards the end, now that the work approaches its termination, that the house will be sold for this purpose will be seen. And he added that the house was not yours, that it belonged to the Cardinal Aginensis, and many other disagreeable words.

He also said to me that he had gone to law with you and that he had the contract for the work. The Ambassador said to me: Michelangelo is in disgrace with the Pope, and does not enjoy his accustomed favour; therefore he has fears of this matter.

I answered him boldly that you feared neither Popes, nor Emperors nor Princes in the world; but that all that you desired was to act for your honour, and your duty to the sacred memory of Julius. With these words I pacified both. In conclusion I said to them that it would be more for their satisfaction and that of his Excellency the Duke, if they would agree to your

wishes, and do that which seemed to you in one way or another the best to finish the work, rather than to stand upon punctilios.

And should it unhappily occur, which God forbid, that you died, the work would not be finished either the one way or the other; for it does not rain Michelangelos, neither could men be found to understand it far less to finish it. And besides I did not know in what manner the statues whether finished or only blocked out could be taken from Florence without you. These words struck home, and they confessed that what I said was true and more in their favour than yours. And they deliberated how to persuade the Duke to do what you wished, especially the Ambassador: and he told me not to regard the words of Messer Hieronimo, for he will so act with the Duke and also with Messer Hieronimo that they will accept what you wish, so did I persuade him with my statements.

I said to them that there were two statues worth at least ten thousand ducats, and they would do well to pray heaven that you would be favourable.

Consequently Messer Hieronimo is gone to Urbino, and has promised me to do his good offices, and the Ambassador has done as much by letter.

I have related all these conversations to our Lord; and he is highly pleased, and has told me not to fear Messer Hieronimo, for he will do what he wishes. His Holiness added that for your own sake keep to your great work, and that you may be secure in your position say that the statues which you have finished and which are in progress are worth all the money which you have received. They will then understand that they must disburse for the rest of the work and you will not be called upon even to put in the house.... Advise me what to do and write such a letter as I can show to the Ambassador and which

may be sent on to the Duke; write with boldness and confidence however, that if made secure of what is due to you, you would finish the work.

My friend I find the Pope every day more anxious to do you pleasure, he wishes you so well, and he is as desirous to see you satisfied, as you can be to see it ended. He tells me that it is not necessary to say either to the Duke or his agents that you make the drawings and models, and that you direct it; they will be only too well satisfied. You have already done too much with your own hands, they may be pleased. This is the point, how can they be otherwise than satisfied? They cannot oppose themselves to your wishes and you have the Pope on your side. Pardon me if I cannot explain every thing to you with the pen, but feel assured that I tell you the truth and that every thing has happened as related.

Pardon me that I have not sent you the portrait of the Pope: I have done it from one painted from the life. And the Pope wishes me to do another like that on stone. So soon as it is copied I will send it.... « the usual good wishes and in conclusion, I pray you, advise me again about the affair of the house; is it yours or does it belong to the heirs of the Cardinal, and also how much money have you received and what was to be the cost of the whole work? for I do not know how to reply on these heads either to them or to the Pope. »

Always yours

SEBASTIANO DE LUCIANIS
Painter.

Addressed: Domino Michelangelo de Bonarotis.
In Firenze [1]

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

Sebastian paints as well with the pen as with the pencil and we are brought into intimate contact with the actors in the scenes which he so vividly describes. It would only weaken the effect of his letter to dwell upon the motives and objects of the different interlocutors. They need no commentary, they are so clearly set forth; but in reading the remarks of the agents of the Duke of Urbino, it is impossible not to be struck by their injustice, whilst it is difficult in the face of the history of the case to understand how they could be made. It could not have been already forgotten, that whenever Michelangelo was permitted to do so, he worked with his whole mind at the monument producing some of his finest statues. Undoubtedly several of these were sacrificed by the interposition and high handed acts of the Popes. That was not the fault of Michelangelo. The real claims of the Della Rovere were against the Popes, but it was easier to persecute the artist than to appeal to the justice of the papacy and so Michelangelo was made to suffer. He unadvisedly and weakly admitted a debt on his part to the heirs, whereas if the history of his transactions be calmly contemplated from the commencement of his work for Pope Julius, the heirs of that Pontiff were largely his debtors. Unhappily it appears that there were defects in the legal evidence of the indebtedness of Julius and although there can be no moral doubt of it, the Della Rovere evidently did not acknowledge the debt.

His health broke down under the pressure of hard work in the Sacristy and of his vexations. It was soon seen that after the events of the siege and the disappointment of his hopes for his country, on resuming his labour, he became thin and down cast, so that his friends felt apprehensive and Giovanni Battista Mini wrote to Bartolomeo Valori on the twenty-ninth of September 1531 that Michelangelo had finished the second of the female figures the Dawn « in the Sacristy of San Lo-

renzo, which in every way surpassed that of the Night in beauty.» He then mentioned that «Michelangelo had fallen off in flesh, the other day with Buggiardini and Antonio Mini we had a private talk about him, and we came to the conclusion that he will not live long if things are not remedied. He works very hard, eats little and that bad, sleeps none and for a month past his sight has been weak and he has pains in the head and vertigo, and in fine his head is affected and so is his heart, but there is a cure for each as he is healthy.» [1]

The proposed remedies were that he should no longer work in the Sacristy in winter where «he would work and kill himself» the air being damp and cold, and as to the heart what was really wanted was to arrange the questions between him and the Duke of Urbino who molested him without cessation. It presented itself to the mind of Clement, as a remedy for this last cause of illness to try the effects of a mild exercise of spiritual authority. He therefore issued a brief on the twenty-first November 1531 in which he commanded Michelangelo under pain of excommunication, latae sententiae, to do no work either as a painter or a sculptor except for the monuments of the Medici already commissioned. Having by this means outflanked the Duke of Urbino, the Pope trusted that Michelangelo would recover his health and that the brief would be made use of by him as an excuse for declining commissions which were offered him. It appears that the Artist's friend Benvenuto della Volpaia suggested to Clement that something must be done to protect him from commissions, if he was to get on with the work in hand:

«His Holiness was provoked when he heard that you were besieged to execute so many other works and he said: «Let

[1] Gaye. V. II, p. 229.

him stick a brush between his toes and make four marks and say there is a picture, and as to that other for Bartolomeo Valori[1] leave it to me;» and he told me that he had sent you a brief ordering you to undertake no work except for His Holiness under pain of excommunication, and he asked me if this would suffice to you for an excuse. In truth he shows in his conversations that he shares in your vexations. When I explained to him that working in that chapel would be your death, he answered me and said: « that you should no longer work there: » as one who thought that you had another place or workshop: and I said to him that you have need of a large place away from the noise of people, assigning for that many reasons: when he asked me if the refectory of San Lorenzo would do then I answered him as coming from myself that the best would be at Sta Caterina.»

26th November 1531.[2]

Besides this description of the strange use to which so formidable a spiritual weapon of the Church could be applied, the letter is otherwise interesting. It shows that Michelangelo although advanced in years was still unable to accept a variety of commissions, not having surrounded himself with a body of trained pupils upon whom he could rely.

For any work of serious importance requiring ability of a high order, he was still under the necessity of engaging artists as assistants who were not in the usual sense of the word his pupils. His inability to complete the statue of Apollo which he had voluntarily undertaken from a desire to conciliate Bartolomeo Valori, and which was so far advanced, seems strange. The Pope to whom Valori was devoted, promised to interfere.

[1] The statue of Apollo, now in the National Museum, Florence.
[2] The Buonarroti Archives.

The real reason of Michelangelo's unwillingness may be surmised, if it cannot be asserted. Valori was one of those thorough going partizans who at this time united himself to the Medici and others to crush out the last remains of Florentine liberty. This is quite sufficient to account for the unfinished state of that beautiful sketch as it may now be called.

Michelangelo's complaints of overwork at this time show also that he was ill in health. His commissions were not so numerous as to require so formidable an exercise of spiritual authority to diminish their number. He was at the time working alone in the Sacristy, occupied with the statues of the monuments and superintending the progress of the Laurentian Library in which excellent artists were employed.

It appears by a letter from the Cardinal Salviati existing in the Buonarroti Archives, that Michelangelo undertook to paint a picture for his Eminence. But it was not executed.

In December the Cardinal Cybo wrote from Carrara to request Michelangelo to design a monument for him, to cost from one thousand eight hundred to two thousand ducats. The Cardinal said that he would be satisfied if he would make the design, « when he would apply to one or other of his pupils to execute it as perfectly as possible. » This was a very moderate demand. Michelangelo designed with facility and made his drawings with incomparable rapidity, yet this commission so easily complied with in one sense was not executed, and the most probable reason was, that there were no such pupils as the Cardinal imagined. Vasari speaking of his assistants says: « He loved his assistants and associated with them: as with Iacopo Sansovino, il Rosso, il Pontormo, Daniel da Volterra, and Giorgio Vasari the Aretine, towards whom he showed much affection and directed his attention to the study of architecture, intending some day to make use of his services.

Those who say that he would not give instruction are mistaken, because he gave it willingly to his intimates and to whomsoever asked for advice. With those who lived in the house with him he was unfortunate. Piero Urbano of Pistoja trained by him, had ability, but was idle; Antonio Mini was willing but wanted brains; Ascanio della Ripa Fransone, (that is Condivi the biographer) worked hard, but no fruit resulted. » The first four artists mentioned were in no accurate sense of the word pupils of Michelangelo, Vasari himself was only a short time in his study. They can hardly be spoken of as assistants either. By the remarks upon those who lived with him, it is obvious that he could not trust to them, to work apart from his directions and very little with them. Thus any organized plan of work to be carried on by Pupils was surrounded by insuperable difficulties. Michelangelo could only contemplate much personal work in accepting commissions, and if he required important assistance, he applied to established artists of reputation, not his pupils to render it; and it has been already seen how frequently this plan failed.

The practice however of combined work between Master and pupils was so customary that the suggestion of the Cardinal Cybo was perfectly natural, and in all probability the Della Rovere thought of the subject in the same way and were therefore unable to understand why, notwithstanding Michelangelo's employment by the Popes, their commission was apparently neglected. Michelangelo himself undoubtedly intended to carry it out by the employment of a large staff of assistants. But he did not or could not do so. Even when it was in his power and when left to himself during the first years of the reign of Leo, he did not employ sculptors to push on the work, but only skilful marble cutters of architecture and ornament, whilst he carried on the statues almost unaided. It must have been that he could not

work in association with artists of capacity, or they, however capable, could not realise his ideas. This was the case in the Sixtine, and in sculpture he was so far above all sculptors of the time, that the same difficulty presented itself and was equally insuperable.

The negotiations regarding the monument of Julius, were of long duration. Fresh difficulties were made by both sides, but the Pope and Sebastian del Piombo were unwearied in their efforts to compose differences. Michelangelo on his part was thus far unreasonable that he not only shrank from taking any part in the work with his own hands, but he was even unwilling to accept the responsibility of giving orders. He wished only to make the designs and models and to pay the artists employed, so far as the balance in his hands would permit. It appears that notwithstanding the opinion of Clement and of Sebastian del Piombo he admitted that he held a balance due to the work.

Sebastian wrote to him on the fifth of December that his projects were inadmissable. That the agents of the Duke required that he should proceed with the monument and that he should watch over others and then finish their work. In the same letter he adds: « Our Lord is of opinion that it would be of advantage if you would come here, that so matters might be more easily settled. » [1]

Michelangelo replied that he would proceed to Rome, to which assurance Sebastian answered: « You will do more in half an hour, than we can in a year; and I believe that with a few words you may settle with His Holiness; for he wishes to satisfy you. Your coming depends upon yourself and ought to be within a month or a month and a half; for within that time will be received the decision of the Duke and his power of Attorney. » [2]

[1] [2] Buonarroti Archives.

This power arrived on the fifteenth of December and had the Ambassador remained in Rome, Michelangelo would have gone there, but he was obliged to depart for Pesaro leaving the further conduct of the affair in the hands of Ostacoli, whereon Michelangelo was advised not to come in the absence of the Ambassador who had shown himself so favourably disposed towards him. Thus the negotiations were again arrested, and it was not till April of the following year 1532, that Michelangelo received a full explanation from Sebastian:

5th April 1532.

« Very dear Friend. Hieronimo Scelario (Rucellai) has arrived and told me of your well being, and that you only await a letter from me to set out for Rome. I wrote you a letter some days since, I believe in the week before Holy week, in which I related every thing to you and told you that the Ambassador of Urbino had returned to Rome. But from what Hieronimo says, I perceive that you have not received it. Therefore I repeat to you, that the Ambassador has said to me, that he must write to you and he awaits you with desire, and he also said to me: « provided Michelangelo will calculate what he has done in Florence on account of the monument and send it to Rome, we will do all that he wishes. » My friend, let not this alarm you; for it rests with yourself to state what you please. However knowing what your wishes are I had not courage to explain them to him, for I do not doubt that if they knew what your ideas are, such a blaze would be lighted and such things would be put into their heads, which they do not now think of, that it would be almost impossible to remove them: and even without this, I am aware how they boast. In which case seeing the discrepancies between you, your visit here would be useless, and I believe, that you would return to Florence in a worse state than you are now.

But if you would adhere to what I have written to you, you may by words and by promises to make designs and models, satisfy them for that, which so long since they advanced to you.

You will gain your wishes and they will destroy the contract and you will get out of this sad business; and besides remember that you have a Pope who is not only well disposed to you, but is also personally attached to you. Whilst you now have fortune thus propitious, learn to value it, remembering that perhaps we might have another Pope who would take quite a different view and might be as favourable to the opposite party as this one is adverse. You may say, if the Pope chooses, he may set me free entirely; I answer you that for many reasons he cannot honourably do so, as you know better than I, and whoever says the contrary to you is not your well wisher and does not understand. It grieves me that I cannot with my pen express all that I have to say, if I could argue with you for half an hour, perhaps you would see it in another light. However, my friend, it appears to me, that to get out of so much slavery and so much sorrow and danger, it will be to your advantage to give them all those stones and figures which are for this work, and cause them to be finished by another and so come out of this difficulty as well as you can; for now you have lawful cause for refusing such work, inasmuch as the Pope has decided that you work for him alone. With that shield you may arrange with them as you choose, and they will be content. As the weather changes so may they also change, and you might wish to do things which perhaps would not please them. Your honour and glory will not rest in these figures, which have been done, nor in this work only: all the world will know that it has not been finished by your hand, and there will be no responsibility, happen what may, you are too well known, your light is as the sun's.

Think who you are and that no one makes war against you but yourself. And being aware of this, is it possible that with your prudence and capacity you cannot remedy this affair, which is so easy in one way if so difficult in another? I dare say that you laugh at my letters, and I think that I see you doing so; but I, on the other hand, lose my patience and doubt everything when I think how that with a few words of yours, you might obtain your wish and come out of so painful a position.

The end of it all is this; if you will put into their places the figures which are done as well as the square work, come, you will be the happiest man in the world and you yourself will be satisfied that they are in their places, otherwise if you will not consent to this, I counsel you no further, you will awaken many things that are sleeping.

Hieronimo (Rucellai) has told me that if you will come, give him notice, and he will go and bring you from Florence and accompany you to Rome, and will again return with you to Florence. This idea pleases me greatly, and I advise you to accept the offer; it will both be a convenience to you and you will be happy in such good company. Do not hesitate to make him come for you. I will say no more. Christ have you in His holy keeping. Next week I will send you the portrait of the Pope. I have finished it, it only needs to be varnished.»

This 5th day of April 1532 in Rome.

Yours Ever

SEBASTIANO DE LUCIANIS
Plombatore.[1]

This graphic letter shows how difficult it was to deal with Michelangelo. His suspiciousness, and it may be allowed want of calm judgment, were causes of infinite trouble to himself and to his friends.

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

Michelangelo had left Florence to go to Rome, when Sebastian wrote to him on the sixth of April, to hasten him. When he arrived, he showed himself sincerely desirous of accomodation and was by this time persuaded either by his own reflections or by the representations of his friends, that he must give way on the question of personal work and superintendence.

On the other side the Duke had instructed his Ambassador to meet Michelangelo in a favourable way, and to avoid displeasing the Pope.

Thus all former contracts were on this occasion annulled, and it was agreed to prepare a new one, which was confirmed on the twenty-ninth of April 1532 in the presence of His Holiness, of the Most Reverend Gonzaga Mantoa, Giovanni Monte, Dame Felice (Della Rovere a natural daughter of Julius II) and the Procurators of the Duke of Urbino, Giovan Maria Della Porta and Girolamo Staccoli d'Urbino.

In this new convention it was stated in the first place, that the price agreed upon for the monument was ten thousand ducats, afterwards increased to sixteen thousand, of which sum Michelangelo acknowledged to have received eight thousand; but the work not being yet finished and it being no longer intended to finish it in the manner previously established, the Procurators absolved Michelangelo from indebtedness in respect of the eight thousand ducats, he binding himself to make a new design and model of the monument, in which there were to be six statues of marble already commenced, which were to be completed in three years, reckoning from the month of August next.

On the day that this new contract was to be signed, the twenty-ninth of April 1532, Michelangelo left Rome by the instructions of the Pope to resume his work at Florence. This appears to have been an unfortunate circumstance. Michelangelo must

have been hurried, for he afterwards stated that the contract contained affirmations which were not true. The Ambassador however wrote next day to the Duke of Urbino in excellent spirits, that God be praised, the contract was at last signed. « I have promised to Michelangelo, who has shown the utmost respect for your Highness, to send to you any design which he may be pleased to make. Amongst the other conditions which I have imposed, he is held to execute six of the principal statues with his own hands; these alone will be of a world's value as they will be incomparable. The rest he may have done by whom he pleases, provided that they are done under his orders. And our Lord is satisfied that he should come twice a year to work, and to see what the other artists are doing for two months each time, and they are to be finished in three years, and placed where it shall be determined and all at his cost. As it cannot be erected in St Peters, according to all appearances it can be placed in San Pietro in Vincula, as a place appropriate to the family, and from which Sixtus also took his title, besides it is the church built by Julius, and where he placed the Friars who are there....

At the church of the Popolo it would be well placed as in a more frequented place, but Michelangelo says that there is neither room nor light. » [1]

It cannot but excite surprise that Michelangelo should have consented to the terms of this document. He knew from long and hard experience that in the service of the Popes his time was not his own. It is true that at least three of the statues were nearly complete and others were at least blocked out, but even under these circumstances Michelangelo could not hope to execute the work agreed upon, unless he intended, as suggested by Sebastian Del Piombo, to make much use of the labours of

[1] Archives of the State Florence, Papers of the Duke of Urbino, n. CLXI.

assistants. It may certainly be calculated that at his usual rate of work, it would take him three years to execute the three statues by his own hands in the manner agreed to, whereas he was only to visit Rome at intervals in each year.

Apart from such considerations as these, strange to say, the important document signed with such formalities, in such a presence, after such negotiations, was vitiated by a false and tricky statement. Who was responsible for this cannot now be exactly known, Michelangelo suspected the Ambassador, for at a later period he wrote thus of it: « I say that the said contract of which I afterwards had a copy was not that read in the presence of Pope Clement, and the reason of this was, that that day Clement sent me to Florence, and Gianmaria da Modena (The Umbrian Ambassador) was with the notary and made him extend it after his fashion; so that when I returned and I referred to it, I found entered more than a thousand ducats of the balance against me.... I swear that I do not know that I ever received the money specified in that contract. » [1]

Michelangelo after leaving Rome in April by the Pope's desire to attend to the works in San Lorenzo, did not immediately prepare a sketch of the new plan of the monument of Julius, whilst on the other hand the Duke of Urbino, notwithstanding the frequent demands of the Pope, did not ratify the contract till June. It appears that in the mean time with the full consent of the Pope, and that he might fulfil the obligation of the contract, Michelangelo made effective arrangements in Florence for completing his work there.

It is probable that an engagement between him and Fra Giovanni da Montorsolo, which is described by Vasari, is referable to this very period.

[1] Letter of Michelangelo published by Ciampi.

« Clement, having resolved that Michelangelo should return to Florence to finish the works of the Sacristy and Library of San Lorenzo, gave him orders for as many statues as were required, and that he should avail himself of the services of the ablest men who could be found, and especially of the Friar.

Michelangelo and the Friar having proceeded to Florence, the former made great use of the latter in executing the statues of Lorenzo and Giuliano, for smoothing and polishing and under cutting, by which means the Friar learnt many things from that divine man, observing him attentively whilst he worked. »

The world renowned statues of Il Pensiero and Giuliano were therefore now nearly completed, for the work of Montorsolo in polishing shows that such was the case. Those of Night and Dawn it has been seen were also as far completed as they now are. But those of Day and Twilight, not being noticed, were probably only blocked out.

Michelangelo's personal position in Florence was by no means secure. He incurred, as has been already remarked, the personal dislike of Duke Alexander by resolutely declining to take any part in designing a fortress intended to dominate Florence. Another step which he took was well calculated to increase this disfavour.

It has been said that he advanced a sum of money on loan to the Republic to assist in maintaining the liberties of Florence, but writing from Rome to Sebastian Del Piombo on the twenty-sixth of June 1531, he concludes a letter on the frequently recurrent subject of the monument of Julius with the following statement, which shows that the loan, if he refers to the same transaction, was by no means a voluntary one.

« I do not particularly describe my state for it is needless, only this I wish to say to you, the three thousand ducats which

I carried with me to Venice in gold and silver coin became fifty by the time that I returned to Florence, and the Commune also took from me about one thousand five hundred.» [1]

From this letter it appears that Michelangelo's flight from Florence proved a very costly affair and in the face of this statement, doubt is thrown over the truth of the story of his offer of a loan to the Duke of Ferrara, for he evidently required all his money.

At a later period he saw in the favour of the Pope and in his predominant influence over Florence an opportunity of recovering the amount of the forced loan, he therefore presented a memorial invoking his assistance. The Pope, although the recollection of Michelangelo's conduct and opposition to the Medici was painful to him, took his part and his conduct is thus described in a letter from Sebastian:

16th August 1533.

«I gave the memorial to His Holiness in presence of the Florentine Ambassador. On which our Lord in a style and manner, which I believe that he never before used in any thing relating to Florence, with such impetus, fury, and bitterness ordered him to write to His Excellency the Duke, using such terrible words on that evening that you would be astonished were you to hear them repeated. It is not allowable to write them and I reserve them till we meet.

I am impatient to see you, to converse with you for half an hour, now that I have cleared up every thing with our good and holy Master: I believe that by this time you must have seen some of the effects. He insists that you should have four hundred ducats of the ward, and the five hundred ducats of the loan to the old state.» [2]

[1] [2] Buonarroti Archives.

Such a proceeding as this was not calculated to smooth matters between Michelangelo and the existing government of Florence, especially with its head the Duke now compelled to pay money which in fact had been borrowed to help to keep him out. Nothing short of the all powerful influence of the Pope could have induced the existing authorities to pay this debt of their predecessors and enemies. Whilst His Holiness directed his own friends to refund to his favourite artist a sum of money employed to destroy his own influence in Florence.

It was the wish of the Pope that Michelangelo should hasten the work in the Chapel so that he might proceed to Rome, and in obedience to this desire he divided what remained to be done amongst various artists, which is alluded to in a letter from Sebastian dated from Rome the 20th of August:

«I have made known the whole tenor of your letter to the Pope; who is entirely satisfied and he says, that whatever pleases you will please His Holiness. He also says, give the execution of the seats, the ceiling and statues and stairs to whom you like, that they may go on with them during the winter without you, provided that work is done, and the undertaking does not stand still, and that they may do what is possible without you.

And when you have put these things in order you may come here at your own pleasure, to carry on your work here this winter; and in the spring should it please God you will return to Florence as you have written; here there are no objections to overcome, it rests with you to do what you choose.» [1]

In strange inconsistency with previous complaints of overwork and with the means taken to prevent Michelangelo being harassed with commissions, these negotiations terminated by imposing upon him a greatly increased amount of personal exertion and labour.

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

It was evident that what remained to be finished in the Laurentian Library, could be fittingly intrusted to other artists, but the present state of the statues on the Medicean monuments shows that no one but Michelangelo could complete them. The clothed statues of the Dukes might be polished by Montorsoli, but the emblematic figures must be wholly by the Masters hand.

Notwithstanding the preparations described by Sebastian, Michelangelo did not go to Rome but remained the greater part of 1533 in Florence. In September he was summoned to meet Pope Clement at San Miniato al Tedesco, whither His Holiness had gone on his way to be present at the marriage of his niece Catherine de'Medici, daughter of Lorenzo duke of Urbino, with Henry, second son of the most Christian King Francis. Sebastian del Piombo was in the papal train then on its way to embark for Marseilles from Porto Pisano or La Spezia, and no doubt he was present at the conference between the Pope and Michelangelo, to whom he presented his horse, probably because it could be of no use on board ship.

Michelangelo returned to Florence to hasten his arrangements for his visit to Rome, whilst the Pope continued his journey and was transported with his court to Marseilles in the galleys of the Duke of Albany. On the twelfth of November he sailed again arriving at Savona on the eighteenth, whence he again embarked this time with Andrea Doria, for his own port of Civitavecchia, re-entering Rome on the twelfth of December.

Michelangelo was still in Florence and at the beginning of 1534, at which time, although the date is not exactly known, his father Ludovico Buonarroti de'Simoni was seized with fatal illness and died in his villa at Settignano in the ninetieth year of his age. Michelangelo caused the dead body to be transported to Florence for burial, the obsequies being conducted at a considerable expense, entirely defrayed by the affectionate and generous son.

He grieved over the loss of a parent to whom he had been so devoted. His sense of filial duty was carried even to excess and was marked by an unfailing patience and tenderness, which no want of judgment or right feeling, no injustice of the father could wear out. Ludovico was of narrow intellect and hasty temper, and like all weak men was unreasonable and unjust. He often tried his good and noble son, to whose love for him he was so deeply indebted, in the most unworthy manner. Impatient as that son was in his dealings with others who offended him, and subject to outbursts of passion, he was ever gentle and considerate of his father's faults of character, whilst from an early age he denied himself even common necessaries that he might minister to his wants.

Ludovico in dying had expressed a wish that a faithful female servant who had attended him should not be forgotten and alluding to this in a letter to his brother Giovansimone he writes: « Because my father recommended her to me, I never will abandon her. » [1]

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

Chapter XVI

Notwithstanding the active preparations made to facilitate the completion of Michelangelo's work, so as to enable him to go to Rome in fulfilment of his agreement with the Duke of Urbino, it does not appear that he left Florence till the Autumn of 1534.

There can therefore be no doubt that he devoted his time without interruption to the statues for the Medici monuments, aided by Fra Giovanni Agnolo Montorsolo in finishing those of the Dukes, whilst working himself exclusively on those of Twilight and Day, till September when Pope Clement died on the twenty-fifth, his death putting an end to Michelangelo's labours in San Lorenzo.

The Sacristy, or to give it its modern and more familiar name, the Chapel of the Medici, at that time presented a very different appearance from that which it does now. Giovanni da Udine was busy painting the dome with arabesques and decorating both it and the panels beneath, now empty and meaning-

less, with ornaments in stucco.[1] All is now broken down or hidden with white wash, but what was the nature of the ornamentation may readily be surmised by the study of other productions of this great artist.

The Pope's instructions regarding them written on the seventeenth July 1533 had been very precise, and show how entirely his taste differed from that which has covered them with white wash: « Our Lord is happy to learn that you are pleased with (the design for) the vault by Messer Joanni da Udine, and has commissioned you expressly to say to Messer Joanni on the part of His Holiness, that many people have informed him that the vault is poor in colour, and that he does not like so much white, and that His Holiness rather wishes that the vault of the Chapel should resemble that of his « Vigna, » which is that of Messer Baldassarre da Pescia. And above all that Maestro Joanni be sure to use durable colours, to be as lasting as possible; that above all things he avoid certain blues and greens which fade; thus His Holiness wills that I should advise you.»[2]

It is evident then that the Chapel of the Medici was richly decorated. There is a work existing in Genoa which is very probably in important respects an imitation of what once existed in the Medici Chapel. It was done under the direction of Montorsolo, in the vault which contains the monument of Andrea Doria under the choir of San Matteo. Montorsolo has imitated Michelangelo in various important statues in this choir, and as he was present when Giovanni da Udine was busy in the Medici Chapel, it is very likely that he imitated the ornaments which he saw executed under the sanction of the great master.

[1] Stucchi. The Italian expression for this kind of ornament in relief. It was entirely unlike the mechanical stucco work of the present day, not being cast but modelled in its place by admirable artists and always full of spirit and variety of invention. The art may be said to be lost. It was imitated from ancient Roman work, which however it excelled in almost every respect.

[2] Buonarroti Archives. Letter of Sebastian del Piombo.

Michelangelo set out for Rome and arrived there on the twenty-third of September and two days after his arrival Pope Clement died. He only remained a few days and then returned to Florence, where he staid till the close of December. What he did at this time is perhaps indicated by the remark of Vasari that « Clement being dead he thought himself free to work at the monument of Julius. » But this idea was soon dispelled when he returned to Rome.

When the Pope died, the decorators in the chapel which he had watched over with such anxious care, were within fourteen days of completing it, but on receiving the news they at once dispersed.

Various circumstances suggest what must have been the state of the works, when the death of Clement thus scattered the busy artists. Michelangelo's health having given way in the chill air of the chapel, he left the statues there of Night and Dawn, and carried on the others in a workshop provided for him by the Pope. The chapel itself must have been entirely filled with the scaffold poles which supported the stages on which Giovanni da Udine worked with his assistants.

The Laurentian Library was incomplete, especially the great hall of entrance, the staircase being subsequently erected by Giorgio Vasari. The crowning cornice was not set up, nor the timbers of the roof hidden by any ceiling, the niches prepared for statues and the panels for reliefs were left empty. Within the Library, although the design was further advanced, yet what is now seen cannot be all that was intended. The painted windows, bearing the name of Clement were set in their places in 1558 and 1568, twenty-four and thirty-four years after his death, a rare instance of a posthumous recognition of a Pontiff's wishes. When, or by whom, the statues of Michelangelo were erected in the chapel destined for them, has

not been stated, but that they were so before the death of Duke Alexander is certain, for reason to be mentioned hereafter.

The monuments of the Medici recall, notwithstanding their modern forms, the ideas of an earlier age of art. The sarcophagus with recumbent figures, with shafts and niches rising behind, inclosing statues and crowned with an entablature and pinnacles, however varied in detail, was in the general thought, an inheritance from older creations. Any trace however faint, of the influence of medieval art on the mind of Michelangelo is interesting. His walks from the house in which he sometimes lived at Carrara necessarily led him past the medieval Cathedral of that town, and no doubt on festal days, he knelt in prayer under its Gothic arches. Commenced in the thirteenth century in the Lombard style, it was carried on in the fourteenth by Andrea Pisano, and is quite unsurpassed in Italy for the variety and grace of its carved ornament. That of its more ancient parts partakes of the rudeness of the early Lombard sculptors but all the matchless skill of the Carrara marble cutters is shown in the work guided by the taste of Andrea. It is not unreasonable to suppose that as Michelangelo crossed that piazza daily, he must have looked at the ancient and beautiful work with interest.

The decorative art of the revival was strongly influenced by medieval ideas, and masks and monsters of strange forms and fancy, were repeated in the arabesques of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, almost reproductions — but with more skill of hand and accuracy of drawing — of earlier design, which in its turn had been rudely imitated from the symbolic creations of paganism. All this is more observable in Italy than elsewhere. Nor is the connection between the old way and the new limited to such details as these, the nave and aisles, transepts and tribune of the medieval church survive in its

classic successor. However different in detail the famous monuments of the Medici may be from the canopied altar tomb, their relation to it in fundamental idea is observable, just as the mask under the arm of the statue of Night counterfeiting harrowing dreams, and the others decorating the architecture, unconsciously repeat the fancies of medieval artists, the grim faces which looked down upon him from the capitals in the ancient Cathedral of Carrara. Michelangelo even retained the medieval term « Tabernacle » for the architectural backgrounds of the monuments. The design is graceful, but the general mass, as well as the details seem too small, made to appear all the more so by the massive grandeur and sublimity of the statues, which form so great a contrast to the architecture, as to dwarf it in comparison.

The two Dukes sit in niches too cramped for them, and like the goddess which Hadrian placed in his temple of Venus at Rome, they could not stand upright in the spaces in which they are confined. On each side are other narrow niches, originally intended for statues which never were executed.

There appears to be little room for doubt that the great Sculptor designed these monuments, like other works already described, by the eye only, applying the scale subsequently, not being, as he himself said, then an Architect. [1]

The intention of Michelangelo as to the meaning expressed by these monuments has been variously explained. In these pages what befell the artist at the time when he worked upon them, what were his political sentiments, to what level the Medici had

[1] M. Braun has published a photograph of a sketch by Michelangelo preserved at Vienna, evidently one of his designs for the Medici Chapel. A scale being applied, based upon the proportions of the figures, it was at once evident that it was too large for any space in the Chapel, corresponding with the acute practical remark made by Clement in his criticism. The figures were of different sizes, two measuring seven feet in height being squeezed into spaces less than two feet wide. Others on the cornice nearly thirty feet from the ground are two feet shorter than those below and near the eye. The order of Architecture is in this drawing entirely out of proportion.

fallen in the eyes of the ardent partizan of his country's freedom, have been specially dwelt upon, for nothing can be more certain than that all Michelangelo's works were the reflexes of his thoughtful estimate of character, of the sentiments or emotions by which he was animated, and of an intellect which penetrated deeply into the meaning of every thing to which he devoted his attention.

The statues of the monuments of the two Medici do not in any way represent the men as they were outwardly, nor is it at first perceptible why the figures which sit on their tombs should represent Dawn and Twilight, Day and Night. That these four statues have a meaning, however recondite, must be felt to be the case by all who have studied the art of Michelangelo.

The statue of Lorenzo, popularly called the Thoughtful, sits in his niche, clad in magnificent armour, his head covered with a helmet of fantastic form which overshadows his features, leaning his chin on one hand, whilst the other is placed upon his right thigh, his feet being crossed; absorbing reflection pervades the entire form and action of the figure. The general proportions denote a man of power and action subordinated for the time being to the thoughts which agitate him. Throughout the whole range of the creations of art, of whatever time, it would be vain to look for a face which expresses as this does, such deep and hopeless mental suffering.

Opposite this tremendous embodiment of agony of mind, with a very different expression sits the thoughtless Giuliano. He also is clad in armour, in the garment of power, of wealth and command, his handsome countenance is raised and his glance is free and bold; but utterly without intelligence.

The type of this head is one which Michelangelo has frequently represented. It is that of the David without its intellect and daring, that of the Adonis without its pain. Clad as a military leader, Giuliano holds the baton of command in his right

HEAD OF GIULIANO
HEAD OF ADONIS

PLATE 14.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

hand, but why is it so loosely feebly held, why is irresolution so characteristic of that right hand? In the left there is money, with which to bribe the enemy, he has neither courage nor skill to conquer. Nothing can be more significant than the manner in which he holds the coin, the action especially of the forefinger and thumb is that of a man who is about to count down a sum. No other artist in the world could represent force, as Michelangelo could when he chose, it is therefore not without a purpose that Giuliano is thus represented as an incompetent leader, the face mindless, the hand with the baton of command listless and feeble, the other filled with the purchase money of treason.

In the one statue mental power combined with intolerable suffering and united with splendour and force; in the other, these two attributes are divorced from intelligence. So Michelangelo chose to represent these Medici.

On the sarcophagus, which contains the now desecrated bones of Lorenzo and his worthless son, sit two nude statues male and female. The woman represents Dawn the man Twilight, the beginning and the end of a woeful day. The female statue is one of the most beautiful, is in fact the most beautiful of Michelangelo's creations. In ancient art it has no rival except the Venus of Melos in form, but it far excels that Venus in expression, for as a truthful embodiment of perfect womanhood, full of human emotion, it at once arrests the sympathies. This was a power of Michelangelo. Representing the beginning of the day, tho countenance is inexpressibly sorrowful; the action of the whole woman is that of hopelessness; it must mean that there was no dawn of liberty for Florence, or of the joy which it brings. The Medici had destroyed liberty. The statue of Twilight sits on the other side, a naked male figure which is unfinished but the face being only sketched out in the marble, it is impossible

to say what simpler expression the most inspired and greatest of sculptors from Phidias who ever lived would have given it. What is seen of the expression is genuine sublime, as should be the thought of that sad night which was settling down on Florence.

Night is represented like Dawn by a female statue,[1] which lies on the tomb of Giuliano. The attitude is constrained and uneasy as that of a sleeper harassed by terrible visions, their nature indicated by the strange, vague horror of the mask close to her side. In her face also there is unmistakeably and forcibly expressed suffering. She represents the doleful night which fell on the liberties of Florence, under the tyrannical policy and despotic power of the Medici.

The gifted artist was not however hopeless. He had seen and taken part in the noble combat which the Florentines had fought, and he might well think them worthy of independence; that they might again rise in their valour, that a day was at hand, and in the spirit of prophecy he began to sculpture that Day. He represented it as of gigantic form and strength, but as he had no time to complete his idea, his prophecy remained vague and obscure like all prophecies, and as the centuries have passed away since his time, his thought inspired by hope has not been understood till now, when the restored liberties of Florence have realized it. This statue of the Day that was to rise on Florence, was evidently commenced with a fervent spirit. Although it is only half shaped from the marble, there is distinctly visible in it mighty resolve and resistless power. In its form it suggests comparison with Hercules, but had he finished it, how much nobler it would have been than that embodiment of physical strength, the mindless muscular Demigod of the Grecks, for this statue like all that Michelangelo sculptured,

[1] The sexes doubtlessly suggested by the genders of the Italian words L'Aurora, La Notte, Il Crepuscolo, Il Giorno.

would have been instinct with a meaning or an intelligence which contrast with the unmoved calm of Greek ideal sculpture.

If the Greeks excelled him in their representation of a perfect ideal of physical beauty of form, he far excelled them in the power of expressing mental emotion. He led the way in that great characteristic of modern art as contrasted with ancient, its appeal to the feelings and affections, not by abstract beauty alone, but by the representation, sometimes under plain exteriors and homely forms, of natural sentiment and passion. As already described, Michelangelo illustrated this view of the province of art in the frescos of the vault of the Sixtine Chapel.

The question naturally presents itself, if Michelangelo wished to convey by the sculpture of these monuments an occult meaning highly unfavourable to the Medici commemorated, how is it that he was allowed to do so? Was there no one to ask the meaning of his allegory, or who could penetrate it? It is apparent that such was the confidence placed in him by his employers, that he was allowed to do what he pleased. They were content with very slight sketches, several of which remain, which conveyed no idea beyond the general composition and even that imperfectly. The work was then carried on without the interference of any one as to its details, so long as it was not altogether interrupted by the desire of sovereign Pontiffs to employ him in some other way. That the statues were sculptured in privacy seems obvious, for they never were seen, except by pupils and assistants, who incidentally allude to their merits in their letters, but rarely to their meaning. Finally these statues were erected after the death of Clement, during the rule of the thoughtless Duke Alexander the Moor, without notice or record of the circumstances, and they remain to this day mysteries of which many explanations have been offered, and of which it is probable many more will be written.

None of these symbolic statues have been finished. Those of Night and Dawn are more complete than the others. In all, the masses of marble necessary to strengthen the limbs during the process of chiselling, remain rough and shapeless, nor is it possible to divine how Michelangelo would have finished them. The sarcophagi are not well designed, the statues are poised awkwardly on the sloping sides of the lids, where they could neither sit nor lie without slipping off. The general design has not been well considered before the statues were executed, and the difficulty of uniting them properly with the sepulchres has been insuperable.

Lorenzo and Giuliano are carefully perfected in every part, so far as may be judged from the pavement of the chapel. This no doubt was due to the assistance of Montorsolo, without which these magnificent statues might also have remained incomplete. [1]

In another part of the chapel is placed a marble group of the Virgin and Child Jesus, which Michelangelo alludes to in his letter of April 1526 as « Our Lady which is to be in the sepulchre at the head » (of the chapel). In his representations of this subject the tender loving side of Michelangelo's character appears, he forgets his « terrible » and becomes gentle and emotional.

This group is little more than blocked out. A drawing of it, which remains, is of great interest, being a bold sketch with the pen, for the guidance of those charged with shaping out the marble. The chisel of Michelangelo is obvious on the body of the child and the face of the Virgin, but all the rest appears to be assistant's work. There were various reasons why this fine group should not have been finished. The monument of which it was to form part was not executed. The head of the Virgin and her raised foot are both too small in their rough state, and to complete them, more of the surface of the marble

[1] See Appendix for an account of the opening of the Sarcophagus of Lorenzo on the first of March 1875.

must have been cut away still further reducing these parts. In its actual state it affects every one who looks on it with admiration of the sentiment of gentle motherly love and tenderness combined with dignity which pervades it. Thus, although an unfinished, it is a very precious work of the great artist.

Michelangelo arrived in Rome two days before the death of Clement, which took place on the twenty-fifth of September 1534. His purpose in coming to Rome was to fulfil his contract with the Duke of Urbino, but he was in a short time to be made aware of new and formidable impediments to his purpose.

In October 1534 Alexander Farnese, Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia, was elected Pope. If not distinguished for political ability he was a lover of literature and art and inherited his predecessor's admiration of the genius of Michelangelo whom he was resolved to employ on various important works, and much time cannot have elapsed before he sent for the great artist and informed him on his return to Rome in December that he wished to have him near his person, explaining to him at the same time his objects.

Michelangelo who saw in the Pope's wish new difficulties in the way of his fulfilment of his contract with the Duke of Urbino, earnestly and respectfully besought him to consider these engagements. His Holiness exclaimed: « I have entertained this wish for thirty years and now that I am Pope, shall I not realise it? where is this contract, that I may destroy it! »

Michelangelo heard these words with a feeling which must have partaken of the nature of despair, shown by his immediate resolution to quit Rome and to take refuge in an Abbey of the Bishopric of Aleria in the Genoese territory, and not far from Carrara. He had the greater reason to anticipate a favourable reception that the Bishop was created by Julius, and had been his intimate friend. Another idea, which in his new difficulty he entertained, was to go to Urbino and to carry on his work

there. It would seem that with much forethought he had sent an agent there to purchase a house, which shows that he anticipated a possible interference with his contract. With calmer reflection he recalled the lessons of experience, remembered how impossible it had been for his native government to shelter him from the power of Julius, and he saw how little he could escape from that of Paul. He therefore remained in Rome and hoped that the Pope would be mollified by his representations in favour of right and honour. Whatever these may have been, they did not avail him. Paul accompanied by a numerous cortege of Cardinals visited the artist's house, that he might see the designs and Cartoons in progress for the great fresco of the last Judgment, which had been ordered by Clement and the statues which he had already prepared for the monument of Julius. He was resolved to examine minutely every thing with his own eyes.

The Cardinal of Mantua who was present, observing the statue of Moses, exclaimed: «This is enough to do all honour to the memory of Julius.» The Pope having seen every thing, renewed his offers in the presence of his Cardinals, but Michelangelo again pleaded his engagements to the Duke of Urbino, whereon Paul said: «I will so arrange that the Duke shall be content with three statues by thy hands, and that the other three shall be done by another.»

Negotiations were again reopened with the Duke of Urbino through his Ambassador at Rome, and such was the resolution of the Pope, that they were gradually carried to a succesful termination, although some years elapsed before this was achieved, during which time, no doubt, Michelangelo was kept in a state of great anxiety.

The Pope having notified his resolution to stay the proceedings as to the monument in the mean while, and that Michelangelo should go on with his commission in the Sixtine Chapel, he is

represented as having commenced to paint the great fresco of the Last Judgment in 1534. A little consideration will show that this cannot be a correct statement. He arrived in Rome in September, and the Pope was elected in October. Previously to this event every thing would necessarily be in abeyance. He also left Rome and did not return till December when the interviews and transactions with His Holiness must have occupied some time, and before it was decided that he should go on with the proposed great work, probably some months elapsed. The season of winter once set in, painting in fresco cannot be safely carried on. There were besides preparations required to enable him to commence so great a work.

Vasari relates that he lined the entire wall with carefully selected bricks, and that he made it lean forward at top so that dust might not lie on the picture. This certainly is not now observable. After this wall was built, it would require time to dry thoroughly, then the rough plaster had to be laid. It is evident that the operations described during the preparation of the vault, had to be repeated on the east wall, and it may be added under the guidance of Michelangelo's mature experience. Due weight being given to these considerations, Michelangelo certainly could not begin to paint the fresco of the Last Judgment in 1534. That he occupied himself for part of his time preparing studies, is certain, but it is equally probable that he carried forward the sculpture for the monument of Julius. Somewhat later two statues of Active and Contemplative life will make their appearance in this history, the work of his hands; when were they executed? Vasari says that he secretly worked at the monument, when Clement believed him engaged with the cartoons for the fresco. This could not be the case in Florence, for the occupation of his time there is fully accounted for; but substitute the name of Paul for that of Clement, and the

story becomes probable. In the interval between the death of Clement and the completion of the arrangements for commencing the immense fresco in the Sixtine Chapel, the great Sculptor may have striven so far, to fulfil his contract with regard to which he was so much in earnest, even at risk of giving offence to the Pontiff, before he yielded.

It was not till September 1535, almost a year after Michelangelo's arrival in Rome, that the arrangements proposed by His Holiness were completed, when on the first of that month he signed a brief nominating Michelangelo Chief Architect, Sculptor and Painter of the Apostolic Palace, and numbered him amongst his confidential servants, with all the honours and privileges appertaining to his high office.

His salary was fixed at the amount, previously decided upon by Clement, of one thousand two hundred golden crowns per annum. Six hundred crowns of this income were to be derived from a ferry on the Po above Piacenza, expressly granted to him as a provision for life. Michelangelo did not formally take possession of this, through his agent, till 1537. Some time afterwards his rights were disputed, a rival ferry established, and it may here suffice to say that he did not in the end enjoy his privilege permanently.

Whilst these negotiations and works were in progress in Rome, Michelangelo had formed a friendship which gave a new interest to his life. It is not certain when he first met Victoria Colonna, the beautiful and accomplished Marchioness of Pescara, but it is believed to have been after his arrival in Rome in 1534.

Victoria Colonna was born at Marino, fief and castle of the family of Colonna in 1490. She was the daughter of Fabrizio Colonna and Anna of Montefeltro daughter of the Duke of Urbino. At the age of five years she was promised in marriage to Francesco Ferrante son of Alfonso d'Avalos, Marquis of

Pescara, and they were united on the twenty-seventh of February 1509, when she had attained the age of nineteen.

Ferrante was of pleasing and courteous manners, brave and handsome and possessed of cultivated ability, and the first years of their married life were passed in unalloyed happiness, whilst their house was frequented by all who were noble and distinguished not only in arms, but in literature and art.

It is needless to dwell on the history of the temptation and fall of Ferrante; his death took place on the twenty-fifth November 1525, when he had attained his thirty-seventh year.

Victoria wept for him; none could judge better than she, with her clear moral perceptions, of his errors, but her affection for him never failed, and after his death she remembered only his brilliant qualities and their mutual happiness.

Her husband dead, she wished to take the vows and to dedicate herself to a religious life as a nun, but this the Pope wisely forbade, although he allowed her to retire into a Monastery.

She selected that of San Silvestro in Capite, which was dependent on her family, and there in acts of devotion and of active charity, in study and the exercise of her high poetical feeling, writing verses and religious hymns, she gradually recovered her serenity of mind, and again resumed her intercourse with society. Amongst the men and women she attracted, endowed like herself with high qualities, was Michelangelo, who formed a friendship for her, marked by the depth and grandeur of his character in its devotion and vitality, and returned by her with an admiration of his gifts and talents, which was unbounded. In the relationship which subsisted between them, it is pleasant to contemplate her appreciation of his genius and works, and the happiness which her gentle influence brought to the hitherto solitary self tormenter, who saw too much the sad side of nature, and whose undoubted trials were intensified by his constitutional

melancholy. His life was now illumined by a pure ray to which he turned with all the goodness and love, which were in his nature hidden under its rugged exterior. The intercourse between Michelangelo and Victoria Colonna forms a bright and beautiful episode in a life, the history of which is so sombre as to be almost ceaselessly painful in its aspect, illustrated by his works in which there is hardly a trace at any time of a smile suggestive of happiness or peace.

It must seem strange that this devoted friendship which was a source to him of comparative peace and happiness had no influence on his mind as he painted the fresco of the Last Judgment, the altar piece of the central temple of Cristianity, in which are embodied such ideas of ruthless cruelty, that it might rather have been the fitting decoration of the torture hall of the Inquisition, as that tremendous and merciless tribunal is popularly described.

Michelangelo painted apparently more than one picture for the Marchioness, and her description of one of these, presents ideas so far from those prevailing in the great fresco of the Sixtine as to suggest that it had a meaning apart from his real views of religion in its relation to christians. He finished the picture for her with great care, and she wrote to him:

«Your works forcibly awaken the judgment of whoever looks at them, and I spoke of adding goodness to things already perfect, to win more experience by them, and I have seen «omnia possibilia sunt credenti.» I had a profound belief that God would grant you a supernatural faith to paint this Christ: and I found it so admirable as to exceed all that I had been able to imagine: and animated by your miracles, I wished for that which I now see marvellously fulfilled, that is, that it should be perfect in every respect, more could not be desired nor even hoped for: I must tell you that I rejoice that the angel on the right

hand is so beautiful, for the Archangel Michel will place you Michelangelo on the right of the Lord on that new day.

Meanwhile I do not know how to serve you better, than to pray to this sweet Christ for you, whom you have so well, so perfectly painted, and to beseech you that you may command me as altogether yours in all things.» [1]

Amongst those who frequented the society of the Marchioness, were the Cardinals Gasparo Contarini, Reginald Polo, Giovanni Moroni and Iacopo Sadoleto. It may be believed that she spoke of the new doctrines which it was then wished to introduce into the Church. Her faith is shown by a letter which she wrote to Marcello Corvino afterwards Pope Marcello II, in which expressing herself as to the opinions of Bernardino Ochino, who embraced the new doctrines, she writes:

« I grieve greatly that the more he thinks that he excuses himself the more he accuses himself; and the more that he thinks to save others from shipwreck, the more he exposes them to the deluge, he being himself outside the ark which saves and gives security.» These few lines sufficiently show her opinions and belief as to remaining within the Church, and there is nothing in the life and sayings of Michelangelo to justify the assertion, that such was not his faith also. He embraced the views of Girolamo Savonarola regarding the importance and necessity of a reform of morals within the Church, in its Officebearers as in all other members of it, but this does not mean that he embraced any of the doctrines of Protestantism. Like many holy men within his own communion, he desired a reform of morals in an age, when vice tainted every order of society from sovereign Pontiffs downwards, but his life and letters show that he never for a moment contemplated coming out of that, which the Marchioness of Pescara speaks of, as the ark of safety.

[1] The Buonarroti Archives already published by Hermann Grimm.

Michelangelo, like other artists who had lived before him, gave expression in his works to the longing desire prevalent for the victory of virtue over vice, and like them he hurled into Gehenna whoever had dishonoured virtue whatever his station, Popes, Priests, monks of wicked lives, share the fate of other sinners in the bold and impartial art of those times.

It was during the period of his friendship with Victoria Colonna that the poetic genius of Michelangelo found expression in many sonnets, which place him on a high level as a poet as well as artist.

There is in these none of the terrors which at the time inspired his pencil, they reasoned of his affections and he transmitted them from time to time to the lady who was his ideal of womanly purity. After the fashion of the age in which he lived, the sweet and honest friendship which marked their intercourse was spoken of as platonic love, and his verses are filled with platonic conceits interwoven with christian thoughts, much like his art in which paganism and christianity are so mixed that they cannot be separated.

In these pages devoted to Michelangelo's history and thoughts as an artist no attempt will be made to analyze his genius as a poet. Much has been already written by infinitely more competent authors as to his poetic merits. Here they are only alluded to as a tribute of respect for his genius. If, in estimating the great character of Michelangelo his poetry is examined, it bears evidence to his purity of mind, his patriotism, his religion and his affectionate nature and capacity for the highest and purest friendship. He wrote verses even from an early age, but his most prolific poetic time was that of his ripe age when under the influence of the admirable Victoria. His devoted pupil and biographer Ascanio Condivi has expressed himself in lines upon this subject which have been repeatedly quoted: « He

greatly loved the Marchioness of Pescara of whose divine spirit he was enamoured, whilst he was by her devotedly loved in return, expressed to him in many sweet and pure letters which he possesses, whilst he wrote to her many sonnets full of fancy and gentle friendship.

She frequently went to Viterbo and other places to spend the summer and for change, coming at times to Rome for no other reason but to see Michelangelo: and he on his part so loved her that I remember hearing him say that, when he went to see her when she was dying, he lamented that he had not kissed her face as he did her hand. »

Nothing can express better than these words the pure and reverent love with which Michelangelo was devoted to Victoria, nothing can be truer to the intensity of his feelings than his regrets. On her death he lost all control of himself.

Victoria Colonna died in February 1547 and, it might be justly said of her, she owes her place in history as much to her own pure and lofty character and to her genius as to the glad episode in her life, her friendship with Michelangelo, although it has increased the interest with which she is regarded.

Chapter XVII

When it is remembered how greatly Pope Paul III added to the architectural splendour of Rome during his pontificate of sixteen years, his disappointment upon finding an obstacle to his employment of Michelangelo may be understood and sympathised with. His plans, characterised by genius and grandeur of conception, were liberal and high minded, for the benefit of the Church and of the State, and for the improvement and adornment of Rome. It must have appeared intolerable that he should be prevented availing himself of the ability of the greatest artist of the age by his devotion to a work of no public benefit or utility, and which originated in selfish vanity.

The Pope was of too resolute and energetic a disposition to allow such a hindrance to his plans. His predecessors had prevented the completion of the monument of Julius from motives which were scarcely less egotistical than its design and purpose, but those of Paul bore a loftier character.

Whatever their nature they were not likely to influence the Duke of Urbino, but he had strong motives for wishing to conciliate the Pope, and he so far yielded to the representations made to him, that the contract with Michelangelo was apparently allowed to fall into abeyance.

Important works were undertaken or continued at the beginning of the new Pontificate. The Pauline Chapel was by the Pope's orders designed and commenced by Antonio Piccone da Sangallo, who was also the architect of his family residence the Farnese Palace in the Campo de'Fiore. The Farnese gardens were laid out with their terraces and decorated pavillions on the ancient Palatine hill, and the neighbouring Capitoline was soon to feel the active influence of the Pope's taste and love for splendid buildings.

It was neither as Architect nor as Sculptor that Michelangelo was first employed by Pope Paul, but to paint the fresco of the last Judgment in the Sixtine Chapel, projected by his predecessor Clement. It was to the credit of the new Pope that he was satisfied to allow a work to proceed for which preparation had been made, instead of casting it on one side in favour of some device of his own for his personal or family honour.

The difficulties which present themselves to the acceptance of the truth of the usual statement, that Michelangelo began to paint the fresco of the last Judgment in 1534, have been explained in the last chapter. It is a significant fact that the artist's appointment to the high office of Architect, Sculptor and Painter of the Apostolic palace is dated the first of September 1535. This would seem to indicate that the negotiations with the Duke of Urbino and with Michelangelo did not make very rapid progress. Both, there can be little room for doubt, would be very unwilling to overthrow a contract so solemnly ratified. When the nature of that contract is considered, it seems strange that Paul should

have been so anxious to get rid of it. By it a part only of Michelangelo's time in each year was to be given to personal work for the Duke of Urbino, the rest was at the Pope's disposal. He could therefore paint the fresco when the season was favourable, and in winter dedicate himself to the statues for the monument, whilst his assistants might, under his direction, proceed with it permanently.

It would have been well for all had the contract been maintained, and the conciliatory disposition shown by the Duke of Urbino entitled him to more consideration at the hands of the Pope than he met with. It would seem however that His Holiness could be satisfied with nothing less than the entire disposal of Michelangelo. His emoluments were fixed at the same amount as by Clement, twelve hundred gold crowns a year, six hundred of which were secured and intended to be a provision for life on a ferry on the Po above Piacenza, which Michelangelo took formal possession of in 1537.

At what period of 1535 Michelangelo began to paint in the Sixtine Chapel cannot be now determined. As he could not begin his preparations till some time after the election of the Pope, and as those preparations were of an extensive description and careful nature, they must have taken some time. It may be doubted whether the brick facing was built in the unfavourable winter season, for about the fresco in its present state there are no symptoms of the effects of damp. In all probability Michelangelo profited by the experience gained on the vault, and commenced his new work with prudent deliberation.

There is a strange story told by Vasari in the life of Sebastian del Piombo, that he prepared the wall for painting the last judgment in oil, hoping to be employed to assist Michelangelo, and that the latter ordered the preparation to be taken down. All this is very improbable. Sebastian who was an excellent man

of business never would have taken such a step, or encountered so serious an expense, without a complete understanding with Michelangelo, of which there is not a trace in the correspondence, whilst Vasari in relating what took place with regard to the preparation of the wall by Michelangelo himself, evidently means that it was done after the election of Paul.

There might have been two preparations at different times, but this is an unsatisfactory solution. The declaration that painting in oil was an art for women and wealthy people, put into the mouth of Michelangelo, must mean, if it was said at all, that it is not suitable for mural painting, in which aspect the criticism is interesting and important. In early life Michelangelo showed in his round picture for Doni, his appreciation of and his great skill in oil painting.

As formerly, when the door of the Chapel shut on Michelangelo, his operations vanish from our view. The history of the fresco is not illustrated by graphic letters to his kinsfolk describing difficulties and disappointments, or troubles springing either from the self-willed obstinacy of the Sovereign, or the incapacity of assistants, or from his own want of experience. When carefully examined it offers no evidence of any being encountered which were not readily disposed of. Neither have any incredible statements been made as to the shortness of the time occupied in painting this immense work. On the contrary more time has been assigned to its execution than it can have occupied, for on examination, it will be found that it was painted with marvellous rapidity, by a hand, which knew no hesitation.

Thus occupied, 1536 and the greater part of 1537 passed away. That the fame of the picture was in that year spread to other parts of Italy is illustrated by a letter written by Pietro Aretino, who thought that he could instruct even Michelangelo. He thus wrote on the fifteenth of September 1537:

« Why not be content with the glory hitherto acquired? It seems to me enough that you have conquered all other artists in your former works, but I feel that in painting the end of all things which you are now doing, you aim at surpassing your representation of their beginning, so as to triumph over yourself. Who is there that would not tremble and fear to dedicate the pencil to so terrible a subject! I see in the crowd the Antichrist with features which you alone could imagine: I see terror on the countenances of the living. I see the signs of the extinction of the sun, moon and stars; I see the elements melt and disappear, and I see exhausted Nature become sterile in her decrepitude, and time sapless, and trembling that his end should be come, sitting on his arid throne; whilst I hear the angel's trumpets terrify the hearts of all, I see life and death scared by the fearful anarchy, the first seeking to raise the dead, the other to destroy the living; I see hope and despair, the first arraying the hosts of the good, the last gathering together the masses of the bad; I see the theatre of clouds illumined by the bright rays issuing from the pure light of heaven, with seated in the midst Christ girded with his splendour and his terrors, and I see his resplendent countenance, which fills the good with joy, the wicked with despair; also I see the ministers of the abyss, with their horrible aspects, deride the Cæsars and the Alexanders who conquered worlds, but could not conquer themselves, self conquest being reserved for the saints and martyrs, who achieved this greater glory. I see fame with her crowns prostrate under her own chariot wheels, and lastly I see the arrowy flight of the words of judgment, issuing from the mouth of the Son of God amidst tremendous thunderings, amidst the confusion of the elements, fly downwards and dash against and destroy the frame of the world.

I see the darkness which has spread over space illumined only by the light of paradise and the furnaces of hell. Whilst such

are the thoughts which the ruin wrought on doomsday present to my mind, I say to myself: if we tremble and fear in the presence of the work of Buonarroti, how shall we fear when we see ourselves judged by Him who is to judge us! Your Signory may believe that the vow, which I had taken, not again to see Rome may be broken by the desire which I have to see this picture. I will rather give the lie to my purpose than fail to do honour to your genius, which I pray you to believe, it is my wish to herald.» [1]

Aretino's object in thus describing the doomsday, in which it is altogether doubtful that he believed, was to obtain from Michelangelo the gift of one of his works. His was a venal pen, but not the less dangerous. That he was not a judge of the province of art is obvious, but Michelangelo knew that his eloquence might take the form of merciless and unscrupulous satire which there were plenty of people to believe, therefore he prudently replied:

« I have experienced both joy and sorrow in receiving your letter, joy that you, who are so unique a genius, should write to me, and sorrow inasmuch as having completed a great part of the picture I cannot avail myself of your imagination which is so just, that had doomsday come, and had you actually seen it, no words could describe it better than yours. To answer your proposal to me, not only would it be agreeable to me, but I beg that you will do it, for even kings and Emperors think it an advantage to be the subjects of your pen. If I have anything that could be pleasing to you to accept, I offer it to you with all my heart. »

[1] Bottari and Ticozzi. Letters on painting and sculpture. Milan, Silvestri, 1822, p. 88-90.

This letter indicates that considerable progress had been made with the painting in 1537. The scorn of Michelangelo hidden under courteous words, may have pierced even the hard hide of Aretino. He did not write his proposed advertisement, but negotiated to obtain the gift of a work of the great artist. What he finally wrote will appear hereafter.

In the month in which Aretino honoured Michelangelo with his correspondence, the Pope issued a Brief regarding his employment of a very singular nature. It is not related what were the immediate motives for its publication, whether the Duke of Urbino or his friends were again pressing Michelangelo and so necessitating the Pope's interference, or whether in his anxiety of mind, he was devoting part of his time to the monument which the Pope may have heard of and wished to prevent.

Vasari states that Michelangelo secretly worked at the monument in the time of Clement. It may be asked when and where? If the name of Paul be subtituted for that of Clement, the story attains consistency and probability. Not only had Michelangelo time in the early part of the pontificate of Paul to devote himself to the monument, but he evidently had the wish, and two statues by his hands, namely «Active and Contemplative Life» which must have occupied some time in the execution, can be best accounted for by assuming that they were done at this time. It will also be seen hereafter that he blocked out other statues with his own hands.

The Brief, which is dated the eighteenth of September 1537, commences by recapitulating the history of the monument and the transactions connected with it. It then goes on to say that Michelangelo was commanded to put it aside by Pope Clement, that he might paint the altar end of the Sixtine Chapel; that thereafter he, (Pope Paul) desiring that the picture should be properly completed and without loss of time, declares that it

was by no fault or act of Michelangelo, but by obedience to his commands that he had not been able to finish the said monument within the time agreed upon, « wherefore he was absolved and liberated, he and his successors, from whatever contravention or failure had taken place, and from any sum of money, which on account of the monument he had received. » [1]

The last contract made with the Duke of Urbino with the especial sanction of Pope Clement was ratified in April 1533, therefore when Paul issued the above Brief rather more than four years had elapsed, and the contract, which was to be completed in three years, remained unfulfilled. The statement regarding Clement is singular in its unfairness. He is represented as being the first to stay a work, which long before had been arrested by Leo X. Pope Clement did not stop it to enable Michelangelo to paint the fresco in the Sixtine, and he was perfectly justified in giving that commission, for the artist's time was at his disposal for eight months out of each of the three years of the contract's proposed duration. It was Paul who defeated the contract, and the statement of his Brief is eminently unjust to his predecessor, whose conduct is in fact represented as treacherous in the extreme, for he negotiated the last contract with the Duke of Urbino, by which Michelangelo was to give part of his time to the monument and part to the service of His Holiness.

To give effect to these arrangements a number of artists were employed to hasten and complete the works at Florence, which detained Michelangelo. There is some obscurity certainly about the dedication in terms of the contract of four months in 1533 to the monument, but evidently a great effort was made to comply with its provisions and any failure to do so that year, probably was explained and excused.

[1] Quoted by signor Gotti in his life of Michelangelo. V. I, p. 263.

It has been stated that the conduct of the Duke towards the Pope was eminently conciliatory, and that he appears not to have insisted on the fulfilment of the contract. This view of the case is assisted by the absence of all complaint on the part of Michelangelo of any interference with his work or his mental peace. From all that has been seen of him and his usual habits, it is evident that had the Urbino party had recourse to their former tactics, they could have made his life unbearable and would have interrupted his work in the Sixtine, whilst he with his usual fervour would have addressed memorials to the Pope and letters to his friends; perhaps thrown up his office. He did none of these things, but continued quietly and industriously at work.

Although the Duke of Urbino wished to conciliate the Pope, he was evidently unwilling to free Michelangelo entirely. A letter written by him on the seventh of September 1539 has been preserved. It is expressed in very friendly and moderate terms:

« Dear Messer Michelagnolo. Although we have held, and now more than ever, that earnest wish, which you may so readily understand, to see finished by you the monument to the holy memory of my uncle Pope Julius, and as we well know it is our bounden duty to be careful that it shall be finished, beholden as we are to the memory of the holy man, notwithstanding, having learnt by a letter from our Ambassador at Rome the great desire of our Lord, we must bear with patience your dispensation from the work for us, whilst His Holiness keeps you occupied on the picture in the Chapel of Sixtus: and as you cannot, and as we by duty and natural inclination will not be wanting towards him in this as in all else, we have with good will agreed to convenience you in the thought of and by the reverence which we bear to His Holiness, so that you may freely

continue the said painting till the completion of the work; with the firm opinion and hope on our part, that being finished, you will give yourself to the monument, doubling your diligence and solicitude to remedy the loss of time, as His Holiness has pledged himself that you will do, having benignly offered himself to urge you to do so: to this end we have written this ours, that as a long time has passed since you began the said monument, we are entirely persuaded that you must be as desirous as we are to see it finished; and holding you to be a man of honour, as we certainly believe that you are, as you cannot be otherwise seeing your singular gifts, we do not further solace you, thinking it to be superfluous, except that it may preserve your health, so that you may honour those holy remains of him, who when living honoured you and other learned men of that time as we have heard many times; and we request that if we can otherwise be of service to you, that you will let us know, as we shall do it with that good will, which your rare talents merit. May it be well with you.» [1]

Michelangelo had shown his friendly feeling towards the Duke of Urbino some time before the receipt of this letter, by making for him a design and model for a saltcellar to be executed in silver gilt. Girolamo Ostacoli thus describes it in a letter to the Duke: «The model for the saltcellar has been finished now for about two months and the silver work is commenced, consisting of the talons of certain animals, which are to support the vase decorated with masks and foliage as directed by Michelangelo,» who thus like other great Masters of the time, showed his readiness to undertake the design of works of decoration. A mortar in white marble ascribed to him is preserved in the

[1] The Buonarroti Archives.

Rospigliosi palace at Rome, and is a very beautiful work. Its story is told by Vasari and it undoubtedly exhibits the characteristics of Michelangelo's phantasy.

The Pope was in the habit of visiting the Sixtine Chapel from time to time to see the progress made, and on one occasion he turned to Messer Biagio di Cesena, his Master of Ceremonies, who was in attendance and asked him, what he thought of the fresco. The straight forward Biagio replied, that he thought so many naked figures very immodest, and that the painting was not suitable for a Chapel, but fit only for the resorts of immorality. Michelangelo heard these remarks, and when his visitors had departed, he painted the head of the demon, judge and Master of Ceremonies, Minos as a likeness of the critical Court official, who upon hearing of it, complained to the Pope of the gross insult. The Pope replied: « had he placed thee in purgatory, I should have done all that is in my power to relieve thee, but as thou knowest from hell there is no redemption. » This event must have taken place when the completion of the picture was near at hand for the figure of Minos is in the left hand corner near the bottom. About the same time Michelangelo met with a serious accident by falling from his scaffold whilst at work. It is fortunate that this happened near the end of his painting, still he must have fallen seven or eight feet. He was much bruised and shaken, and was carried home, when with that strange disposition of his he refused all assistance or advice and lay groaning on his bed. His friend Baccio Rontini, an able surgeon, was not to be baffled and found his way into the house and to Michelangelo's bedside and did not leave him till he had healed his bruises and enabled him to resume his work. Vasari goes on to say that he completed it in a few months.

It is much to be regretted that Michelangelo should have left no written record of the thoughts which influenced him when

he designed and painted the fresco of the last Judgement. The subject had been frequently represented by some of the greatest of his predecessors in art. By Giotto, Orcagna, and nearer his own time by Luca Signorelli.

It had been usual to paint the Judgment on the wall of entrance of a Church or Chapel, as by Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel at Padua, and in the Chapel of the Podestà at Florence. In the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Maria Novella in the same city, it occupies three walls. It was also considered a fitting subject to represent in a cemetery, and was painted in the Campo Santo at Pisa. Luca Signorelli's famous compositions are on the lateral walls of a Chapel in the Cathedral of Orvieto.

The idea of Pope Clement to represent the Judgment as an altar piece, with the mouth of hell, with all its horrors, exactly over the altar, was an innovation. The Priest engaged in the most sacred functions of his religion could not raise his eyes, without seeing that dark opening, and figures of demons peering out of it, which are horrible or ludicrous, according to the temperament of the spectator. The inconsistency of such a representation on such a spot was recognized at a later time and an altar piece of tapestry was placed in front of it.

The subject was represented by the early Masters with gravity and dignity so far as the principal figures were concerned, and in obedience to certain canons and traditions of the Church, but they invariably fell into the absurd in their efforts to depict the terrors of hell.

They invented or repeated from somewhat earlier art, those monstrous and ludicrous forms of devils which have ever since haunted the imaginations of christian men. Even the most ultra-protestants have preserved both in their literature and art these hideous inventions of sculptors and painters, whose faith otherwise they have so widely departed from.

In the pictures of the early Masters the Judge of all men clad in rich robes is represented enthroned and pronouncing sentence. His action dignified, his expression sorrowful, whilst his Virgin Mother near him gazes on him with a look of tender pity and entreaty. The blessed, in bright garments falling to their feet, are placed to the Lord's right hand in rows above each other, in the artist's ignorance of perspective, or to the right and left of His throne if the condemned are represented on another wall. Angels in medieval panoply separate the bad from the good and drive them despairing towards the demons ready to drag them into the place of punishment. The painters were all levellers. Popes, Emperors and the great ones of the earth, Priests, Monks, Nuns and Laymen, are equally driven from the presence of God into the society of devils. There was in these days a liberty of the brush not surpassed by the liberty of the modern press.

Hell was in some cases represented at the bottom of the general composition, in others on a separate wall, and the ideas of Dante were reproduced in a very childish way, so that had they been known only by the painter's realization of them, they would have seemed abundantly common place and devoid of all poetry whatever.

The first great artist who rose above these inanities and substituted for them grand representations of the terrible, was Luca Signorelli. Without question his fresco of the mouth of Hell with the fall of the condemned and the triumph of the demons who reign there, is the most original and at the same time the grandest attempt yet made in art, to realise the terrible scene, to render its horror without falling into the common place or absurd. In that most remarkable picture Signorelli is the Dante of painting, and Michelangelo borrowed ideas from him without excelling him.

The art of Luca Signorelli is preeminently of the renaissance. His power of drawing and of representing life-like expression enabled him to excel the medieval painters in embodying the misery and sufferings of the condemned, but he fell beneath them in depicting the felicity of the blessed, who in his great work are thoroughly uninteresting and indecent. Thinking in the first place of his own skill in delineating the human form, he was the first artist to depart from the hitherto universal practice of previous times and in his famous frescos the souls of the righteous are as naked as those of the condemned. The singular and tasteless draperies with which the former are now invested were painted in an age of worse taste, and no greater morality than his own. If Signorelli thus anticipated Michelangelo in the display of the nude human form in his picture of the resurrection, he did not fall into the further excess of stripping the angels of the beautiful and modest garments with which they had hitherto been always represented. This was reserved for the fresco of the Sixtine.

Michelangelo must have been familiar with the orderly marshalling of the figures, in the pictures of the early Masters, and he was aware that in this they were guided by ancient precepts and doctrines. He also saw the freer design of Luca Signorelli, and in his great painting he combined both principles of composition and design; thus in the Sixtine, if the general arrangement be carefully considered, it will be found to be ordered on a decorative principle of masses of similar forms which balance each other on each side, or above and below the central point of interest of the picture.

This regularity is obtained not as in the pictures of the old Masters by placing the figures in formal rows or in any similar way, but by balancing groups most of which contain a number of figures, the action of each being at the same time

free, for no two throughout the whole composition are alike in position, the invention is inexhaustible.

As this independence of movement, which he aimed at, would have made it impossible to maintain at the same time the general balance of the composition, it is assured by heavy masses of cloud on which the figures sit or stand, the cloud filling up the interstices and rounding off the general masses.

In the lower part of the picture this order is dispensed with, being interfered with, in what may be termed the second story, of the general design by the figures which ascend and descend, but above this it is the rule.

Michelangelo has not thought fit to surround his great picture with any decorative framework, consequently it is not in concord with the other frescos on the vault which are thus enclosed. It is an innovation as compared with prevalent custom and is not a successful innovation.

As has been already stated the Chapel is bare of any constructive architectural decoration, it is a mere barn with bare walls and it has consequently been necessary that the painter should supply what the architect has omitted. Handsome pilasters and cornices are painted to divide the other pictures on the walls from each other, and the magnificent architecture in which Michelangelo inclosed his compositions on the ceiling has already been described. Nothing of the kind surrounds the last Judgment and it consequently presents the appearance of an unframed picture, whilst the sudden change of scale in the figures when compared with those in the paintings near it, has an unpleasant effect which would have been readily obviated by the presence of a moderate amount of architectural ornament inclosing it, and separating it effectually from the frescos close to it.

The top of the picture is divided into two arches by the pendentive of the vault on which the gigantic figure of Jonah is

placed. These two arches are filled with muscular and perfectly naked wingless angels, who brandish or struggle with the instruments of the passion. The pillar for instance is a heavy shaft which they strive with like Carrara quarrymen. However varied the actions of these toiling members of the heavenly host, they form in their general shape two great garlands of figures pendent below the arches, the curves of which they reverse.

In the centre of the composition but near the top, the figure of the Saviour is placed within a glory of an elliptical form and seated; crouching close to His right side is the Virgin Mary. Without this central glory is a circle which includes Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and Saints thought worthy of the same high place, beyond whom the eye penetrates into space and light. On each side are the curved outlines of the spheres of the Blessed brought down with a sweep to each flank, and so forming a vast arch above which is heaven, beneath it the realms of earth and hell. Such is the general composition of the fresco painting.

Allusion has already been made to the dignified and kingly robed figure which sits enthroned in the central place of the pictures of Doomsday by the early Masters, with the well known type of countenance and the look of sadness with which turning towards the wicked He pronounces sentence. It may be very primitive and simple, but if the error is to be committed of painting such a subject at all, what better could be devised? For this ideal air-drawn conception Michelangelo has substituted a youthful athlete of enormous physical strength, as if the unhappy thought had possessed him of thus representing divine power. The beardless countenance is that of Apollo, the locks are parted, wavy and agitated, the features without expression. This young giant gathers his great limbs beneath him to rise from his seat, but pronounces the doom of the wicked as if in haste before he has quite risen. With the index of his left hand

he points to the wound in his side, as he raises and spreads his right with the scar of the nail in it. He is nearly entirely naked, not a robe covers him, but a fragment of yellow drapery hangs from his shoulders, its edges only seen in front, part of it lying across his thighs. The whole action is devoid of dignity, and this figure of the living Christ as judge of mankind, is offensive to taste and sentiment of religion. On the right of this misrepresentation of the Son sits the Virgin Mother, clad in robes of blue and purple, the latter probably once crimson, with a drapery over the head of a greenish hue. Her right arm is bare and of muscular proportions. She folds her hands across her chest and turning her head looks towards the souls of the blessed, who are ascending upwards; her face is without sentiment of any kind.

On the right and left of this central group are what may be literally termed the giants of the old and new Testaments. The most important figure to the right is that of Adam who, stepping forward, gazes over his left shoulder with a look of curiosity towards the Judge, Eve to his right earnestly grasps his arm; she is utterly without feminine grace or beauty, both are stark naked in front, but on their shoulders and hanging down their flanks may be seen the edges of their garments of skins. In front of them sits St Laurence near their feet, with his usual emblem of martyrdom, but it is evident that his own sufferings have taught him no pity for others. Close to Adam, but with his back turned, is St Andrew, and behind this group the heads and shoulders of many other Saints who form the half of the circle to the right.

To the left of the Saviour and in front a naked St Bartolomew, forming a pendant to St Laurence, holds his skin in his left hand, the flaying knife is raised in the right towards Christ, as if he would plead the merits of his horrible martyrdom in

favour of the condemned. Where there is any expression at all in the figures, it is that of protest and entreaty. St Peter holds out his golden key, St Paul behind him raises both hands in deprecation. From all the prominent figures, apparently the cry issues, far be it from thee Lord, forgive them! But the Christ of Michelangelo is deaf to entreaty or plea for mercy.

To the right and left of this great central group, which is so close to the throne, are the crowds of blessed spirits which are safe in heaven. Some are well known Saints, but most of them are a nameless throng, eager, pitiful or indifferent as the case may be. Some clad, some naked, and amongst them many nobly designed figures, unsurpassably fine in drawing, many forms of beauty, but all robust in the extreme. Michelangelo nowhere admits, either into heaven or hell, any, but the physically powerful.

Beneath the great central circle of Christ and the saints, lower down in the picture, is another group of naked angels who blow trumpets towards the four quarters of the universe, and four others hold open the books by which the dead are to be judged according to their works, and still lower down are seen the sea, and the land and the grave yielding up their dead for judgment. Keeping in mind passages of scripture, of which Michelangelo was at all times an eager student, the left hand side of the picture may be understood; death and hell have delivered up the wicked, who have ascended, been judged according to their deeds, and precipitated downwards after the sentence. On the other side the blessed also rise to life and ascend or prepare to ascend, some aided by angels, some by their own merits only, some scale the cloudy battlements of heaven and struggle upwards. The expression of the Blessed, as in the picture of the same subject by Signorelli, presents nothing that is interesting, and it is a remarkable circumstance that in no

single figure is there any reverence, love or devotion towards the God, with whom they are brought face to face. But all Michelangelo's powers of rendering expression are developed to the full, in the faces of the damned there he is terrible, and his art rises infinitely above the childish representations of the early masters in painting the terror and woe of the lost, whilst the demons are tremendous beings invested with supreme power over the children of evil with no dread of the interference of good, suggestion of pity, or claim of mercy; with the privilege of torturing for ever, of which it might be supposed that even devils would tire.

How far such a representation of the day of doom, of the Judge and of the Judgment, of heaven or of hell, in the central sanctuary of the Catholic Church, is consistent with any just view of christianity, need not be discussed here.

In treating the subject as he has done, the ardent disciple of Savonarola, faithful to his Church but a stern denouncer of the pomps and vanities, the worldliness and wickedness of so many of its adherents, from the highest to the lowest, in an age stained by so many and such portentous vices, may have seized the opportunity of representing within the very sanctum of that Church the merciless denunciation of sin.

Whatever Michelangelo's guiding motives he cannot however escape the charge of great irreverence whilst he is open to another, that he thought more of the display of his extraordinary power of representing the human form, than of a fitting treatment of his theme. On the other hand he had with him the sympathy and approval of the head of the Church. The Pope watched the work from the beginning till its termination, and can have made no objections, although some of those around him did so, and it has been seen how the Master of Ceremonies was treated for his honest expression of opinion. It was Pietro Aretino,

however, who placed on record the sentiments of those who were scandalized by such a representation of the day of Judgment in the Pope's Chapel. The letter will not bear literal translation, whilst it is characterised by enormous vanity and much personal malevolence of feeling towards Michelangelo, still it shows that such a method of representing a sacred subject and spiritual beings was not necessarily characteristic of the age, but was altogether exceptional.

The letter was written in 1545 after he had seen a sketch of the entire subject and after he had lost all hope of receiving the gift of something executed by the hand of Michelangelo, it went on to say: «Is it possible that you, who hardly deign to consort with men, can have represented in the sacred temple of God, above the altar of His Son, in the greatest Chapel in the world, where Cardinals and Bishops and the Vicar of Christ, with Catholic ceremonial and sacred ritual, confess, contemplate and adore the body and blood of Jesus.... so lofty a subject, with angels and saints without a remnant of modesty and denuded of all celestial ornament! Even pagans, in sculpturing, I do not say Diana clothed, but Venus naked, imparted to her a modest action: whilst a christian thinking more of the display of his art than of faith, presents holy martyrs and Virgins indecorously naked, so that your design is fitter for a lascivious bagno than the choir of a Church.» Aretino then bursts into a consideration of what would have been the different results had Michelangelo «been advised in representing the world and paradise and hell, with the glory and honour and terror sketched out in his letter which is read by all with admiration. He dared to say, that nature and the benign influence would never have repented of bestowing on Michelangelo so rare a talent, that he was the image and casket of the highest and most marvellous gifts, but that

Providence, which rules all, would have preserved such a work as useful in maintaining the order and government of the Hemispheres.»[1]

These absurd and monstrous expressions go far to destroy whatever seems just in the criticism of the picture, but the general feeling as to its indeceney led at last, soon after it was painted, to Daniel da Volterra being employed to drape the most offensive of the figures, a task which exposed him to much ridicule, but the fulfilment of which has doubtless been the means of saving the picture at a later time from stronger measures and from entire destruction by whitewashing over.

Whilst there is room for so much difference of opinion in discussing the general spirit and tendency of the fresco of the last Judgment, safer ground is reached when describing its design and execution as a work of art.

When Michelangelo painted the frescos of the vault of the Sixtine Chapel he passed his thirty-seventh birthday before he completed his task. If the usual chronology be adhered to he was sixty-six years of age when the fresco of the last Judgment was finished. That at so advanced a time of life he was able to complete so great an undertaking may well be thought wonderful, but the wonder is increased when it is closely and carefully examined. During the twenty-two years which elapsed between painting the vault and the last Judgment, there is no certain account of his having painted any other mural picture, or of his practice of fresco; yet the first impression derived from an examination of the latter work is that it is executed with a more certain and facile hand than the pictures above. In surveying and estimating the powers of the gifted artist these facts have a peculiar interest, for they are opposed to experience, as

[1] The original is in the State Archives Florence. Printed by Gaye. V. II, p. 332.

in most men abstinence from painting for so many years would inevitably lead to loss of power and decay of skill.

In describing the process of painting the last Judgment, it is proposed to follow the plan adopted in analysing the technical execution of the earlier work.

That full size Cartoons or working drawings were made use of, is evident. The nail holes by which they were fixed are observable on some parts of the surface of the plaster. That they were not laborious drawings or much detailed, is also apparent. The manner in which the outline was transferred to the plaster may be inferred first by the general absence of marks of the stylus and secondly by Michelangelo's preference for the pounce bag as shown in his works on the vault. So far as the surface of the great fresco has been examined, there are no instances of the use of the sharp point of a stylus to mark in details of form independently of the Cartoon, whereas these are not unfrequent on the vault. Whilst such are the general facts, there are exceptions. Thus the cavern mouth directly in the rear of the altar, and the demons peering out of it, and a few figures in other parts of the composition, present the clearest evidence of having been drawn by the stylus over the Cartoon with careful attention to detail.

Two circumstances are to be inferred from these observations. The first is that Michelangelo's confidence in his own powers was so enhanced that he painted with very slight indications of outline; the second is, that where the outlines are laboriously marked the work is that of an assistant. There is no other record of assistance but the silent evidence of the fresco itself sufficiently shows that it was made use of. To what amount could only be decided by a close inspection of the whole surface of the picture; there can be no doubt however that by far the greater part of it was executed by the hand of Michelangelo.

An important change is observable in the method of painting. In describing that of the figures of the vault it was observed that notwithstanding their distance from the floor, about from fifty to sixty feet, the faces and heads are painted with the most scrupulous accuracy of detail. Now in the fresco of the last Judgment many of the heads, seen from a distance of twenty feet only, are so generalized that they may be said to be blocked out rather than completely painted. Nothing however can excel the accuracy of the shapes and of the modelling, but minute details are avoided. It is not meant to be maintained that this treatment is erroneous. It is a step in the direction of a principle of modern art to forbear needless detail, and nearer the base of the picture, accuracy of finish increases till all is done that is needful to satisfy the eye.

It is evident that at this period of his life Michelangelo had become a closer observer of the effects of aereal perspective, whilst his subject in which there are many perspective planes, imposed conditions, differing from those of the design in the ceiling.

The method of painting combines breadth with careful modelling of the nude, the parts are rounded with exquisite finish and feeling for truth of light and shade, graduated with perfect delicacy of touch from the high lights into the half tints, from these into the shadows and thence again into the reflections. The eye never wearies of contemplating the perfection of the manipulation, unsurpassed by the most careful painters in oil, yet characterised by a monumental simplicity suitable to the dignity of mural painting. The absense of all «chicque» smartness or affected cleverness of touch, by means of which it is so often sought to withdraw attention from defects of form, is refreshing, whilst the care with which the fiery, vigorous, daring designer works out his boldest ideas is wonderful, and a lesson

to all those enthusiasts, who appear to believe hasty imperfect execution and genius are necessarily coexistent. They may perhaps suppose that this careful conscientious finish of the great Michelangelo must be the result of a great consumption of time, but this mighty artist could paint an entire figure life-size, in the manner described in one working-day, when he chose to do so.

The painting of the draperies where they have been executed by the hand of Michelangelo, is sketchy as compared with the nude, and resembles the method of the fresco's of the ceiling.

It may well be considered a hopeless task to discover and to describe truly what was once the colour of this marvellous picture, darkened, as it now is, by veils of soot and repaint. As well seek the brilliant tints of noon day, in the view of nature seen under the last effects of dying twilight. Such is the first hopeless impression, but patient and careful study may penetrate the mist, when it will be seen in the first place that it has been coloured by the guiding precepts of the Tuscan school and as brightly as the frescos of the vault with which at one time it was in harmony.

Such a number of naked figures it might naturally be supposed, could offer little opportunity of a favourable arrangement of colour, but in the first place there has been a rich glow of varied flesh tints from dark to fair, modified by chiaroscuro and planes of distance, whilst amidst the masses here and there, some figures are clad in lustrous, glistening draperies effectually preventing monotony, the whole having at one time been relieved against sky rivalling in its blue that which hangs over Italy. However dismal and dingy now, at one time the brightness of the upper part of the picture was enhanced by contrast with the twilight over the earth giving up its dead, and the lurid flames or deep shades of the place of torture.

Such was once the effect of colour of the fresco of the last Judgment.

In pictures of the same subject by the old Masters the chiaroscuro was preeminently ideal. This was the result of simplicity on their part and an imperfect comprehension of the effects of nature, rather than of any poetic inspiration. The aerial beings they painted so full of light and with such an absence of shadow did not seem out of place in the region of iridescent cloud, refulgent gold or celestial blue which typified heaven to their ingenuous fancies.

Michelangelo however was now living in an age of artists whose art was distinguished by its truthful and powerful effects of chiaroscuro; thus he followed the realism which prevailed, rather than the ideal treatment of the primitive schools. The figure of Christ is represented in the strong light and shade, and concentrated effect obtained in the Studio, shadow not light preponderates. How different this is from the idea of the old Masters, who represented Christ as himself the source of light. But as he is uttering his sentence of condemnation, it may be thus that the artist expressed the idea that his form and visage were darkened as he turned to the miserable and helpless objects of his wrath. Whatever the meaning, the chiaroscuro throughout the upper part of the picture is so realistic that the solid beings who have gone to heaven and who stand upon rolling vapours and an unsubstantial floor of cloud, suggest in a manner never done before, although many times afterwards, a contest between the real and the ideal, which is entirely unsatisfactory.

It has been shown how completely Condivi and Vasari erred in their statements regarding the retouching of the frescos of the vault of the Sixtine Chapel with distemper colour, and that these have been extensively and very carefully retouched and strengthened by this system.

It is easily seen on close examination that the fresco of the last Judgment is also much retouched in distemper colour; shadows in various parts are deepened by this process, but the colour is not laid on with the caution and softness so observable in the first paintings, but with a splash and affected display alien to the dignified character of Michelangelo's work. It has been already noticed that the fresco of the last Judgment is executed with more facility, it may be said with more mature skill than Michelangelo's first works. Thus he would obtain more certain results especially of depth of colour and consequently would be much less under the necessity of falling back on distemper painting to strengthen and unite his work.

There is however a great amount of retouching easily observable on close inspection of the surface of the fresco, and as this fact is inconsistent with perfect success in the first process, it may be held, especially in connection with the flaunting way in which it is applied, that part of it has been done at a later period by an inferior artist or restorer.

The surface of the picture has been in fact repainted in many places, there are the draperies by Daniel da Volterra and besides there are various instances of repairs, in some cases made with oil paint, which has darkened and is now seen in spots disfiguring the surface of the fresco.

Whilst there is so much evidence of retouching, there is also no question that Michelangelo also made use of distemper in finishing parts of the picture. It is suggested that having more experience, than when he painted the vault, he had no occasion to employ this remedial method so extensively as in his earlier work, but that he made use of it to a moderate extent only according to prevalent usage.

One of the instances of its use is curious. After the work was dry he observed a gap in the composition and he dashed in two

heads in little more than outline, with a purple red in distemper, one of these remains as a blue face, it was put in on the blue sky and carried no further.

The picture is in a lamentable state and the injuries on its surface would supply matter for description which would fill many pages. As they are surveyed the impression which they make is that any successful cleaning of this great work of art is hopeless. It is in a worse state than the pictures on the vault, being more within reach it has been more subjected to restoration, or whatever the processes which it has undergone may be termed. It would probably clean very unequally and any attempt to bring it together again would necessitate further retouching always to be deprecated.

It is a painful fact to record, but the cruellest injury from which the fresco has suffered has resulted from the culpable action of the Chapel Officials. It having been determined that an altar piece of tapestry should be erected, the frame work necessary for its support, instead of being fixed exclusively to the back of the altar, which operation required little mechanical skill, is secured by iron brackets barbarously and brutally inserted into the fresco just below the group of summoning angels. Besides this unjustifiable deed, the so called Church-decorators, — it would be easy to find a fitter term by which to describe them — have been allowed for years to place their ladders against the surface of the painting so as to injure it in the most disfiguring manner possible, and this in the Chapel of the Pontiff and his court; this to the work of Michelangelo!

In conclusion some remarks may be made upon the length of time which Michelangelo required to paint this extraordinary work.

It contains three hundred and fourteen figures, counting heads and most of them are heads or heads and shoulders only. The

joints in the plaster, by which each day's work may be reckoned, are much more visible than in the frescos of the ceiling, where they are so concealed as to be observed with difficulty. They run round the figures and frequently, according to Michelangelo's wont, include portions of the back ground. Thus in the present state of the fresco these lines are readily seen on the surface like those in a child's puzzle.

In his day's work, Michelangelo, when it was desirable, inclosed parts of adjoining figures. For instance a prominent group to the right of the picture is an angel bearing up a soul, which a demon grasps by the ankles by means of a snake bound round them. The group is rather above life-size. The head and shoulders of the angel and what is seen of his drapery and arms, the head and shoulders of the soul and his pendent right arm were painted in one day with a considerable piece of background. The body and legs of the soul were painted on the second day. The whole of the work is of the most careful and finished description.

Whilst Michelangelo could, if he chose, execute an entire figure in one day, his usual practice at this period of his life was to paint a nude figure larger than nature in two days. Numerous instances of this extraordinary rapidity are observable in the fresco of the last Judgment.

As he was occupied from the spring or summer of 1535 till the Autumn of 1541 upon this great work, it is quite evident that he painted with long intervals of repose. Could he have painted daily, without interruption, and with his sketches and Cartoons all prepared, by the evidence of the picture itself, he could have executed it in a year. There is a remarkable letter of Michelangelo, written many years before, that is in July 1523, to his friend Bartolomeo Angelini when being a much younger man he says of himself: «I have much work to do and I am old

FIGURE
FROM THE FRESCO OF THE
LAST JUDGMENT

PLATE 16.

THE NEW YORK
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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

and unwilling, so that if I work for a day I must rest for four.»[1] If at that period of his life such was his account of himself, it agrees with the opinion already expressed, and which is supported by the evidence of his paintings, that he worked at intervals with marvellous energy and miraculous rapidity and then rested from his labour, not that he was then idle; such an intellect as that of Michelangelo never could be idle, but his body needed rest after his great efforts. When more than sixty years of age his intervals of rest must have been more frequent and of longer duration, which may account for the difference between the evidence offered by his work and the statements of his biographers.

The fresco of the last Judgment presents so extraordinary a contrast to the early religious representations of the great artist, which, unlike it, are remarkable for tenderness of feeling, and the entire absence of all display of himself and of his facility, that it is an interesting question, what could have induced so great a change of sentiment on his part of the province of art in its relation to christianity? The distance which separates the tender sorrowful Mother and her dead Son, of the group «the Pietà,» from the youthful Jove and the stalwart indifferent matron who sits beside him and makes no sign in the last Judgment, cannot be measured. The first is full of the love and mercy of christian doctrine and precept, the second is utterly without either.

When first required to paint in the Sixtine Chapel, the mind of the artist must have been in a special manner directed towards the study of the old Testament, to the Mosaic account of creation, to the characters and attributes of Prophets, and the typical events — according to accepted belief — of future woe and retribution. He was called upon to design and paint mighty and

[1] Buonarroti Archives. Letter to Bartolomeo Angelini, July 1523. G. Milanesi, p. 420.

mysterious beings and his style under the influence of the thoughts then engendered, assumed a corresponding mysterious grandeur, as his countrymen say a «terribleness» fitted for his themes. A change was thus wrought in his taste, which never subsequently altered, and when in its turn he painted the picture of doomsday his christianity was darkened, as many men's has been, by his contemplation of the older dispensation.

There can be no doubt that such ideas as are now entertained of the real province of art in its representation of christian subjects, were not present to his mind. His early works harmonize with existing ideas, because notwithstanding his bias they retain so much of the earnestness and tenderness of older art which has so much influence on modern opinion.

It also is apparent that in painting the picture of the last Judgment, he felt it to be necessary to harmonise the forms of the beings which he represented, with the giants of the ceiling. He invested the apostles saints and martyrs of christianity, with the same tremendous forms as the prophets and heroes of judaism.

There is in his fresco of doomsday a circumstance which removes it further from sympathy than the frescos of the vault; he had so come to trust in his own matured skill and power of representing the human figure, that he had ceased to draw from nature, as he did in his humbler days, when he so frequently acknowledged his difficulties in the novel art of painting. The figures of the vault with all their elevated and noble idealism have a humanity due to the artist's ceaseless reference to nature and careful study from it, which arrests the sympathies in a manner unfelt, whilst dwelling upon the figures of his later work, all evidently drawn without nature, and in the spirit of absolute confidence and of the display of his acquired power. The school of which he is the Master and head has even in his own day entered on its

downward course, as every school at all periods of the history of art invariably has done, when it abandons the study of the only source of true greatness in the imitative arts. It is thus seen that not even Michelangelo could abandon the study of nature with impunity. Wonderful as the figures in the last Judgment are for power of drawing, they are marked by sameness and monotony; all are of similar forms and for the most part all seem to be of the same age. How different this from the infinite variety observable in those of the vault, in which the influence of nature is everywhere present, whilst in the fresco of the last Judgment it is everywhere absent.

Chapter XVIII

Antonio Piccone da Sangallo whose genius and whose works place him amongst the first architects of his own or of any later age, completed the Pauline Chapel about the time when Michelangelo finished his fresco of the last Judgment. Pope Paul who gave his name to this beautiful Chapel was desirous that it also should be painted in fresco by Michelangelo, on one side with a picture representing the crucifixion of St Peter and on the other the conversion of St Paul. The great artist was however much more desirous of fulfilling his long delayed engagement to the Duke of Urbino. No doubt he must have reflected that at the age to which he had now attained, he could have no hope of finishing the monument, if he was again prevented doing so by another commission, which must occupy some years. He therefore earnestly opposed a new diversion of his time from the performance of a duty, which had been so solemnly guaranteed, and which the courtesy of the Duke had made more than ever binding on his sense of honour.

But Paul was possessed by the same selfish spirit as his predecessors and with the same indifference to the personal feelings of the gifted man whose talents he wished, as they had done, to monopolise. It is to his credit, as has been already observed, that his object was not in the same sense, the celebration or record either of himself or any member of his family, but it was equally marked by a similar disregard for the rights or feelings of others, for the sentiments of Michelangelo, or for the memory of his great predecessor on the pontifical throne. The successors of Julius were consciously or unconsciously the abettors of a measure of poetical justice, for that Pope when he ordered the destruction of the ancient Basilica of St Peters ruthlessly demolished, through the reckless instrumentality of his architect Bramante, eighty-seven tombs of his predecessors. The arrogance, selfishness and vandalism, which could thus act and propose to erect his own unparalleled monument in the desert which he thus created, were portentous, and merited the fate which befell his project for his own glorification.

The Pope, finding Michelangelo opposed to his plan for the painting of the new Chapel and bent upon resuming his work on the monument, lost no time in again using his influence with the Duke of Urbino, nor did he overestimate it for his Excellency thus wrote to the anxious artist:

Urbino, 6th March 1542.

« Very excellent Messer Michelangelo,

His Holiness, having deigned to inform me, that he is very desirous of availing himself of your services for some time in painting and decorating the Chapel lately erected in the Apostolic Palace, and I, feeling it to be a duty and a satisfaction to render a service to His Holiness, assure you that you may freely

attend to his wishes, provided that you place on the monument to the sacred memory of Julius, the three statues entirely finished by your own hand, including that of Moses, and that you perfect the work according to the last contract, as I have been assured that you have readily and willingly offered to do. As to the other statues you may have them executed by any good and praiseworthy Master with your design and oversight.

In entire confidence that in your goodness and regard for the sacred memory, as well as for all my house you will succeed and will so conduct the work, that it shall be in every way worthy of your reputation and that I shall have every reason to rest satisfied, I shall be greatly obliged to you, this result being attained and offering you my friendly services, may God preserve you.»[1]

This amicable letter admits an important modification of Michelangelo's agreement to provide six statues executed by his own hand including that of Moses, and at the time that it was written, there can be no doubt that two others were advanced towards completion in his workshop. It was therefore favourable to him in his present state of mind, when oppressed with work and growing ill health he knew, that he was no longer able to prosecute a monument in which at an earlier period of his life he had taken so deep an interest. There can be no doubt that he felt deeply the interruptions made by arbitrary power, and on one occasion he was moved to tears by the unscrupulous interference of Leo. The time had now arrived when it was a relief to him to be set free. The Duke's reply also left him without ostensible motive for declining the commission to paint the frescos, whilst he must have been aware that they would occupy some years in the execution, and he had reached his sixty-se-

[1] Published by Gaye. V. II, p. 289.

venth birth-day. He therefore felt that an effort must be made to complete the monument, or he might never see it achieved, and he petitioned the Pope in August, to approach the Duke once more, with a scheme for a very slight modification of his last proposal, and that he should be permitted to hasten the work by absolving him from the necessity of personal labour and by employing artists, whom he suggested might be paid by money in his hands, not only as already agreed to, but further to finish all the statues. The two statues of Leah and Rachel representing Contemplative and Active life, were so nearly finished that a little work under his direction would suffice. He offered to deposit in a Bank, to be named by the Duke, eleven or twelve hundred crowns, or whatever sum might be necessary to pay the sculptors to be employed; « and thus his Excellency may feel certain that the work will be finished, knowing where the money is lodged with that object and he may through his agents expedite the monument, which is much to be desired, Messer Michelangelo being very old and occupied with work of such duration, that he may not live to finish it, much less any additional. » Michelangelo's motive for urging a new convention is here made clear for he goes on to say that so « he will be entirely free and will be enabled to serve and to satisfy the desire of His Holiness, whom he beseeches to write to his Excellency in these terms that he may grant authority to free him from any contract and obligation between them. » Michelangelo in fact ceased from this time to resist the will of the Pope; he had through many years of his life struggled to fulfil his contracts with the family Della Rovere, he now finally yielded for he could not serve them and serve the Pontiff also. In an interesting portion of the petition, he refers to the changes which had been made in the design. « There remained for him to provide three statues by his own hand that is a Moses and two prisoners: the which

three statues are almost finished, but as the two prisoners were made when it was intended that the monument should be much larger and should contain many more statues, and it having been much reduced in the above mentioned contract, therefore they are unsuitable for the present design, nor can they be made fit for it in any way. Consequently the said Messer Michelangelo, not to be wanting to his word, began two other statues to be placed on each side of the Moses, representing Active and Contemplative life, which are far advanced, so that they may be easily finished by other Masters.»[1]

It is strange that neither the Duke nor his agents presented any claim to the two fine statues of prisoners, which they might have urged with reason had been paid for, but it would be a hopeless task to attempt to fathom all the mysteries of the transactions regarding the monument of Julius.

The results of Michelangelo's petition and proposals were favourable, and on the twenty-second of August 1542 a final contract was prepared, the Duke being represented by his Ambassador Girolamo Tiranno. This document is especially interesting as containing a testimony to the industry and efforts of Michelangelo to fulfil his contracts, which does not appear elsewhere. The following is the passage: [2] « The Magnificent Messer Hieronimo Tiranno, in the name of the Illustrious Duke of Urbino, assigns to the Master Raphaello da Montelupo, Florentine sculptor, five statues to be finished for the said monument and which had been blocked out and almost finished by the aforesaid Messer Michelangelo, the which are, videlicet, our Lady with the Child in her arms, a Sybil, a Prophet and an Active and Contemplative life, the which statues the said Master Raphaello has to deliver

[1] National Library, Florence. Republished with the Letters of Michelangelo, edited by Gaetano Milanesi, 1875, p. 485. It is dated the 20th of July 1542.

[2] Buonarroti Archives. Edited by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 747.

finished in the room, where they are, in the house of the said Michelangelo Buonarroti, in whose service he is to be, and in twenty months reckoning from this day.»

This is very distinct evidence that Michelangelo had carried on five statues, two of which he himself describes as far advanced, and as Montelupo undertook to complete all the five in twenty months, four months only to each statue, all of them must have been nearly ready for finishing, thus it is evident that after the death of Clement, Michelangelo made a great and worthy effort not « to be wanting to his honour.» [1]

The contract above referred to, set Michelangelo free, on the understanding that he was to deposit one thousand four hundred crowns in the Bank of Messer Silvester da Mōntauto and company of Rome, in the name of and to the credit of the Duke, for the completion of the monument, « Messer Michelangelo on his part was not to remove any portion of the money except for the daily expenses needful for completing the work, amounting to eight hundred crowns to Francesco d' Urbino who had been paid three hundred, these eight hundred being for the erection of the part (of the monument) above the basement, that is the ornament which remains to be done, and which was to be paid at a daily rate according to the amount of work, and five hundred and fifty, which Raphaello da Montelupo, sculptor, was to have, of which he had received one hundred and five. Which five hundred and fifty are for providing five statues, which he is to finish for that price, which statues are, one of our Lady with the Child in her arms now entirely finished, [2] one of a Sybil and one of a prophet, one of Active life and one of Contemplative life, blocked out and almost finished by the hand of Michel-

[1] His own words in his petition to the Pope.

[2] In guide books this group is attributed to Scherano da Settignano whereas it was commenced by Michelangelo and completed by Montelupo and is to be ranked amongst Michelangelo's works.

angelo, which statues Master Raphaello will go on with daily. And besides fifty crowns to be paid to Francesco d'Urbino to carry the said statues to San Pietro in Vincula where the said monument is commenced, and the statue of Moses which is to be placed in the work will be delivered at the cost of Messer Michelangelo. »[1]

This document is an additional proof that Michelangelo had nearly finished, the two statues of Active and Contemplative life; it indicates that he must also have carried the Virgin and Child far on, for it is now on the twentieth of August stated to be almost finished only a month after the date of Michelangelo's petition to the Pope, but this is accounted for by the fact that in the previous February, he had formally employed Montelupo « to finish three statues in marble, larger than nature and blocked out by my hand, which figures are to be finished in eighteen months. » Amongst these three were certainly the Active and Contemplative life and evidently also the group of the Virgin and Child. By his contract made with the aid and countenance of Clement, Michelangelo was quite justified in this employment of an assistant before that of the twentieth of July was agreed to.

The statue of Moses was to be touched by no one but the great Master himself. It is remarkable that the reclining statue of Julius in the centre of the upper part of the monument is not described at all. It is incredibly bad, a mere caricature of the Pope; there is one expression which apparently indicates that it was executed at the same time as the other statues, for in the contract with Raphaello da Montelupo and Francesco d'Amadore da Urbino of the twenty-fourth August the following passage occurs, « and the said Francesco binds himself and promises that Mes-

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

ser Michelangelo shall retouch the face of the statue of Pope Julius which is on the monument and the faces of the terminal figures.»

These works therefore were erected in Michelangelo's time and under his direction, and whatever the demerits of some of them, must be assigned to him in the same sense in which frescos in the Farnesina painted by Giulio Romano and other Pupils are assigned to their master Raffael.

The terminal figures were carved by Iacomo del Duca, an assistant of Montelupo, as he himself states in his contract with Michelangelo of the twenty-seventh February: «I have received ten crowns from Urbino on account of four heads of Termini for San Pietro in Vincula, which have been done by Iacomo, my assistant.» It may be as well to say also that the coat of arms on the monument was the work of Battista son of Donato Benti of Pietrasanta, who contracted with Urbino to execute this ornament of one piece of marble for thirty-six crowns.

In the preceding month of May, Michelangelo had employed «Giovanni de'Marchesi, mason, and Francesco di Bernardino d'Amadore, called l'Urbino,» to build the whole of the architectural part of the monument, except ornament to be placed over the cornice, which Michelangelo was to erect at his own expense. In case of dispute Messer Donato Giannotti was appointed referee, but so hot a contention arose, that he was unable to settle the quarrel, and Michelangelo's personal interference became necessary. He appointed Messer Luigi Del Riccio as an intermediary and wrote the following letter:

«My Dear Messer Luigi. Your Signory is appointed to settle this discord which has sprung up between Urbino and Master Giovanni, and as you have no personal interest you will judge fairly. To do good to them both, I gave them the work which

you know of. Now because one is too avaricious, and the other is not less foolish, such a dispute has risen, that some great scandal of stabbing or death may occur between them, and should anything of the sort take place I should grieve for Master Giovanni, but much more for d'Urbino for I brought him up. Therefore it appears to me most reasonable, to discharge them both and to leave the work free that their folly may not ruin me, whilst I may carry it on. It has been proposed that I should divide the work giving part to one and part to the other, this I cannot do and to give it.... [1] to one only I should then injure him whom I did not employ. Therefore I think that there is no plan but to leave it free, so that I can go on with it. As to the hundred crowns which I gave them and the amount of work done, let them settle that between themselves, so that I may be no loser. I beg your Signory to do what you can to bring them to an agreement, for it will be a work of charity. Should either of them pretend to have done by himself the little which has been done and to have a claim for further payment, I shall be able to show that I have lost a month's time by their ignorance and stupidity, that the work for the Pope has been delayed, a loss to me of two hundred crowns, so that I shall have claims against them, rather than they against the work.

Messer Luigi I have made this discourse to your Signory in writing, for if I speak of it in presence of the men, I shall burst out upon them so that I shall have no more breath left to talk with.» [2]

Michelangelo was frequently unhappy in his choice of assistants. He had a warm regard for d'Urbino, who was however of mediocre capacity, and on more than one occasion behaved

[1] The paper is torn.
[2] Buonarroti Archives. July 1542. Gaetano Milanesi, p. 464.

very ill, and this time without consideration for his master's interests, but in the most selfish and absurd manner disputed with Giovanni de'Marchesi da Saltri the mason, with whom he was associated in erecting the monument, as to which of them had done most work. Three Master builders were called in to settle this important quarrel, but their decision that the amount of work of each was equal, did not satisfy the litigants, hence the application to Luigi del Riccio, who settled matters between them in June 1543, the following new arrangement being made:

«That Francesco d'Urbino shall devote himself entirely to the said work, exercising all his skill and ingenuity upon it exclusively.... and that he is to hasten it so, that it shall be ready for Christmas.... Master Giovanni is to be freed from it, is to have no share in it, but he may at his pleasure go and see the work going on and that the orders of Urbino are carried out.»[1]

It seems extraordinary after what had taken place, that so imprudent an arrangement as this should have been made, but it is entirely in conformity with the Italian habit of temporizing, apparently as prevalent then as it is now.

Raphaello da Montelupo went on industriously with his work, but the Duke of Urbino delayed sending the ratification of the last contract, so that Michelangelo, becoming uneasy, wrote to Del Riccio in October 1542:

«Messer Luigi, dear friend. I am much pressed by Messer Pier Giovanni,[2] to begin to paint, but as may be seen for four or six days, I cannot do so, for the rough plastering is not dry enough to allow of my making a beginning. But there is one

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

[2] Aliotti Bishop of Forli, whom Michelangelo nicknamed «Tantecose.»

thing which annoys me more than the plaster, and which not only prevents me painting but dispirits me. I know that the Duke has given me his word, but the ratification comes not. I have torn from my very heart, one thousand four hundred crowns, which would have lasted me for seven years of work, with which I would have made two monuments, instead of one, and this I did to be left at peace, and to give my whole heart to the service of the Pope. Now I find myself minus the money, and with more troubles and more warfare than ever. That which I did regarding the money, I did with the consent of the Duke, and with the contract which freed me, and now that I have disbursed, the ratification does not come: it is easy to see what this means without writing it. It is enough to say that for my honesty for thirty-six years and for having sacrificed myself voluntarily to others, I merit nothing else: painting, sculpture, labour and trust in others have ruined me, and now it goes from bad to worse. It would have been better for me, if in my early years I had given myself to make sulphur matches, I should now suffer less! I write this to your Signory as one who wishes me well and who managed the affair and knows the truth, and who will make it known to the Pope, that he may be aware, that I can neither live in peace nor paint, and that if I held out a hope of beginning to paint, I gave it expecting to receive the ratification, which ought to have been here a month ago. I will no longer rest under this load, nor be abused every day as a swindler by one who has taken from me life and honour. Death, or the Pope alone can free me.»[1]

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI.

[1] Buonarroti MSS. British Museum. Gaetano Milanesi, p. 488.

In this fervent letter Michelangelo pours out his feelings on the subject of the Julian monument, expressed so often and in so many ways, but never with more passion than at this time. It seems strange that he should have thus distrusted the Duke after the consideration shown him, but his mind was thrown off its balance when the affairs of the monument were pressed upon it. He again wrote to Del Riccio:

« I am determined, as the ratification has not arrived, to shut myself up in my house, to finish the three figures as agreed with the Duke, which will suit me much better than dragging myself every day to the palace; whoever is made angry may be so. It is enough for me to have so acted that the Pope cannot reasonably complain of me. For me the ratification is personally of no consequence, but it is for the satisfaction of His Holiness, who insists that I shall paint. »

The ratification of the Duke came at last and progress was made with the monument. It is to be presumed that the lower part or first stage was completed by Christmas. The upper part which differs from the lower entirely in style, is said to have been completed in 1545, and it is apparent that Montelupo could hardly have finished his work sooner.

Thus as Condivi writes « the tragedy of the monument came to an end. »

As might be expected from the perusal of its history, this monument regarded in its ensemble is an unsatisfactory work of art. The architecture of the first stage designed by Michelangelo at an early period of his career is in the style of the last part of the fifteenth century — the quattrocento — there is no appearance of that disregard for accepted forms and that aim to be original which afterwards characterised the Mas-

ter; any other architect or sculptor of the time might have designed it, so common place is its general aspect, and like other examples of the early renaissance it is surcharged with small and for the most part unmeaning ornaments. The pedestals of the socles described in the different contracts are retained, although of no use after the abandonment of the statues which were to be placed upon them. They had much better have been removed altogether, but this not being done, they are connected with the architecture above by reversed brackets intended to conceal their inutility but signally failing to do so. The terminal figures which support the entablature, always of doubtful taste, are much increased in size as compared with the original sketch and they consequently make the niches placed between them look insignificant. The upper stage of the monument, which must also have been designed by Michelangelo and was erected under his direction, is in his later and broader manner and almost entirely devoid of ornament, presenting a singular contrast to the profusely decorated lower stage. It must be admitted that he showed a singular want of taste as well as of sentiment in thus deliberately departing from the style of the lower part of the composition when he might so easily have successfully harmonized the two.

In building the first or lowest stage, either d'Urbino was according to his wont careless, or the length of time which had elapsed between the preparation of the blocks and their erection had injured them. They do not fit well together. The cornice especially shows deficient workmanship, is badly mitred and betrays inexcusable neglect, considering the circumstances and the conciliatory conduct of the Duke of Urbino. Of the statues on the upper part, the group of the Madonna and Child is the most pleasing, the figures of the Prophet and Sybil are comparatively weak and unsatisfactory. The contrast which these figures

present to those below is so great, that it is not to be wondered at that his name is rarely if ever mentioned in connection with them, but there is no escaping the conviction that he was the Master who designed them, carried them so far, that it was thought that four months each would finish them, whilst they were completed under his direction. The recumbent statue of the Pope, the face of which he was to retouch is ascribed to Maso Del Bosco and is beneath criticism.

If Michelangelo had deliberately resolved to justify the complaint of the Della Rovere and of the friends of that powerful family, he could not have taken more effectual steps to do so than by the manner in which he completed the monument of Julius, but this is lost sight of in the presence of the noble statue, the work of the prime of his life and of four years of peace, which sits in the centre of the façade. It is this grand this unequalled creation, even of his genius, which people go to see, and probably few think of the rest of the monument or fix any of its features in their memory. Moses, the friend of God, the guide and lawgiver of God's people, is represented by Michelangelo as agitated by strong emotion. He is seated, but his attention is roused by something which startles him and stirs him, he grasps his robe with one hand, with the other nervously clutches his ample beard, and is about to spring to his feet, but pauses for an instant, whilst he gazes on the objects of his displeasure with a look in which indignation and contempt are mingled, yet which might be changed into a glance of compassion.

Language must fail in any attempt to convey any true idea of the sublimity of this great work of sculpture, that it places Michelangelo far above all modern professors of his art is undeniable whilst it entitles him to a niche on an equal level with the greatest sculptors of the ancient world, although his art is so different from theirs, as different in form, as in aim and subject.

The detail of the execution is very elaborate, especially that of the drapery which is arranged with the greatest attention to insure graceful lines, the folds being managed with exquisite taste and skill, so as to show the body beneath, in which are combined the appearance of great physical strength with beauty of shape, the latter approximating even to delicacy and refinement, of which the feet especially are examples.

In contemplating this noble statue with all the attention which it merits, there is a natural temptation to compare it with those of classic times; but, as is the case with all the productions of the period to which it belongs, there is one quality amongst others which separates it absolutely from the grand productions of Greek art, and that is its picturesqueness. There is a pictorial element ever present, in the sculpture of the renaissance, which is never seen in Greek art, either of the period of Greek independence or of that of Roman domination.

The group of the Laocoon, that of the so called Pætus and Arria, or the statue of the dying gladiator, are the nearest approaches made by the sculptors of the ancient world to modern ideas, the last especially is perhaps of all works of ancient sculpture the most popular now, by reason of its truth to nature in form and expression, still there is a gulf between all these and the sculpture of the renaissance.

Neither in the admirable portrait statues by Greek artists, full of realism and truth to nature, is any type to be found of the sculpture of Michelangelo and his greatest compeers. Tullio Lombardo alone approaches nearly to the ancients, for his object was to imitate them as closely as possible, yet it would be impossible for any one, familiar with the productions of the two epochs to confound them. It is well, that it is so. The art of the renaissance, whatever it may owe to the study of Greek art, is a new creation and it is that, which it is most important to appreciate.

There is one important distinction between the sculpture of the two periods, which keeps the one far apart from the other in style, as in time. It is evident that the artists of the Renaissance, including Michelangelo, knew nothing of the subtle numerical proportions which are believed to have regulated the Greeks, in the production of their statues. The Sculptors of the Renaissance not only vary from each other in the proportions observable in their figures, but the same sculptor frequently diversifies them in different works by his own hands. On the monument of Julius the two female statues so often alluded to, differ essentially; the one measures seven and a half, the other nine heads. The one is a short broad woman, the other has too small a head for her body and limbs. There are such differences in nature but as they are not beauties they are not to be followed in art. It is impossible to suppose that either Michelangelo or his compeers worked entirely without a belief in some general formula, yet the discrepancies in the proportions of their statues are striking. Thus forgetfulness of such safe and useful general laws are visible in most of the works which Michelangelo did not complete. One of the prisoners for the monument of Julius which has been left unfinished, is evidently very deficient in the proportions of the neck and head, and owing to miscalculation, there is not marble enough left for the right arm. Whilst the head of the David is manifestly large for the rest of the statue, that of the Victory is small and deficient in cranium.

In his old age when his inspiration began to fail and probably his sight, defects of proportion became still more apparent; especially observable in the group of a descent from the cross now in the Cathedral of Florence. The figure of the Saviour is too large for the others, that of the female much too small. He broke and defaced this group with his mallet, and a pupil subsequently mended it and patched it with cement. He had better

have left it as Michelangelo did, he was a better judge of it than his pupil. There is another dead Christ with two figures, in the court of a palace in the Corso in Rome; portions of the dead body are finished and are admirable, the other two figures he has so hewn away, and so disproportioned, that to complete them was impossible. These facts either indicate the absence of definite laws of proportion, or forgetfulness of them, while they prove that the system of working without full size models is very unsafe even with great practice.

It seems almost incredible that any portions of the noble statue of Moses should have been left unfinished. It may be justly thought that it was calculated in a special manner to enlist the interest and amour-propre of its creator, whilst the expressions of trust and confidence written by the Duke of Urbino, were further motives to complete it in the most careful manner. Nor was time wanting, especially when it is considered how little was needed to remove every deficiency. Still it was left unfinished in the following parts; the drapery on the left thigh, both the hands, part of the neck on which marks of the toothed chisels are seen, part of the hair, and the horns, on which criticisms are frequently made hardly to be considered of value, as in their unfinished state it is impossible to say what Michelangelo meant to make of them.

Placed as the statue is on a plinth only two feet high, it would have been easy for Michelangelo to finish every part of it with his own hands. He was bound to do so by many considerations, especially by the conduct and expressed confidence of the Duke of Urbino, as well as by the obvious desirableness of giving no cause of complaint. He afterwards undertook a work in sculpture for exercise and the benefit of his health, he was therefore able to use his chisels although so advanced in years. Complaints were renewed and unhappily he had reason to feel that «the tragedy of the sepulchre» was not over.

The difficulties with the Duke of Urbino being settled, Michelangelo devoted himself to the frescos of the Pauline Chapel, which as shown by his letter to Del Riccio he commenced in or after October 1542, when the arricciatura or rough plaster was sufficiently dry to allow him to do so.[1] 1543 is very barren of letters, probably his time was principally occupied painting in the Pauline Chapel, and watching over the works for the monument of Julius.

In June 1544 he fell dangerously ill and by the care of his friends was removed from his own comfortless house to that of the Strozzi, where he was carefully tended by Luigi Del Riccio. Daily inquiries were made for the invalid by messengers from the Pope and from all who were distinguished in Rome. Roberto di Filippo Strozzi then at Lyons in whose house Michelangelo lay, wrote to Del Riccio making friendly and anxious inquiries as to the health of his patient.

Del Riccio on the part of Michelangelo thanked him saying that he was better and able to walk about the apartment and added:

« He begs that you will send him some news, and remind the King of his message by Scipio and subsequently by Deo the Courier, that if his Majesty would restore the liberty of Florence, he Michelangelo would make a bronze equestrian statue of him without cost to any one and would erect it in the Piazza della Signoria. »

Michelangelo showed his love for his country by sending this message to the King; but like all his countrymen he overlooked the fact that such foreign intervention only led to change of master, not to liberty.

[1] Buonarroti MS. British Museum. Gaetano Milanesi, p. 488.

Leonardo Buonarroti, Michelangelo's nephew, when he heard of his Uncle's illness hastened to Rome to see him and received the following letter, which it may be hoped was not deliberately written but under the influence of his malady:

«Lionardo, I have been ill and thou, at the suggestion of Giovanfrancesco, hast come here to kill me and to see if I leave any thing. Hast thou not enough of mine at Florence to satisfy thee? Thou canst not deny that thou art like thy father, who in Florence drove me from my home. Know that I have made my will in such a manner that thou needst not to think of what I possess in Rome. Therefore begone with God, and do not present thyself to me, nor write to me more, but act like the priest:» [1]

MICHELAGNIOLO.

Dated thus by Lionardo: «1544. Received the 11th of July in Rome.»

It is to be lamented that Michelangelo who attached so much importance to noble descent and high position could so far forget himself, as to express himself in a manner unworthy of either, such a letter seems unbecoming and no doubt was so, but he had been through life plundered by selfish relatives. There was nothing in the home of his childhood to make its remembrance pleasant, his mother is never alluded to, his father was violent unreasonable and sordid, his brothers greedy and careless of the family honour, Michelangelo generous to a fault to them all, met with no return of love or gratitude from those on whom he bestowed so many benefits with an open hand. It may be feared

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

that his nephew who owed all to him, resembled other members of the family, but his visit to Rome at such a time was obviously a duty.

It was not only to his relatives that Michelangelo showed the warmth of his temper. The following extraordinary letter was directed to his friend Del Riccio to whom he was so much indebted and to whom he was undoubtedly warmly attached. It is without date, nor is his reason for writing it known:

« Messer Luigi. You suppose that I shall reply as you wish but it may well be to the contrary. You give me that which I have requested. Truly you do not sin in ignorance sending it to me by Hercules, being ashamed to give it to me yourself. He, who has snatched me from the grave, may censure me, but I do not know which weighs most upon one, censure or death. In short, I pray and conjure you by the true friendship existing between us, that you destroy that print and burn the other impressions, and that if you make a profit of me, you will not make others do so likewise: if you make of me a thousand pieces, I will do as much, not of you, but of your affairs. »

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI
Not Painter, Sculptor or Architect,
but what you will,
but not a drunkard, as I told you at home.[1]

This wild letter to a man to whom he was sincerely attached, is incomprehensible. Happily the friendship was renewed, but such outbursts must have led to permanent estrangements. His temperament may be compared to the summer-skies of his native Italy, for the most part bright and serene, diffusing light and dispensing blessings, but suddenly overcast with black storm-

[1] Buonarroti Archives from Rome 1546.

clouds, bringing with them furious wind and thunder, hail and rain. The « Temporale » as the Italians call it, vanishes as it came, and calm is restored, but the disastrous effects of the transient tempest are visible long after, and some of them remain for ever.

Although Michelangelo's bitter and violent letters occur more frequently than could be wished, and from their nature must have given great offence, still on the other hand there are many more preserved, which show his kindly nature and warm heart.

Michelangelo was not exclusively occupied with the frescos of the Pauline Chapel in 1544. The Pope since his elevation, felt desirous of increasing the magnificence of the Farnese palace commenced when he was a Cardinal. Antonio da Sangallo his architect had carried it up two stories when the Pope expressed himself dissatisfied with the design of the cornice, and requested the opinion of Michelangelo who gave it without reserve in the form of a report. Whether it was part of his duty to do this as the Pope's official architect, or whether such a proceeding was in conformity with usage, it is impossible to say; but that one architect should report upon the work in progress of another, in every way his equal, in some respects his superior, was eminently calculated to foster that enmity then so common between artists. It is impossible not to feel that Sangallo was ill used and that Michelangelo should have declined such an office. The report is entirely technical and, is of such severity as to overshoot the mark. In it Michelangelo appears more as a rival, than a critic. The design by Sangallo has disappeared and therefore these remarks are based on his known reputation, his works and on the utter improbability of his having made a design, which as described by Michelangelo was defective in every particular, not having a single merit, and showing an ignorance of proportion which would have been discreditable to an apprentice.

Having written so condemnatory a report, Michelangelo's next step was still more unfortunate, for he consented to make a design himself for the cornice of a palace of which his rival still was the architect, and this under circumstances of a very singular and undignified nature, as he agreed to enter into competition with three designers altogether his inferiors in every respect, Pierin Del Vaga, Sebastian Del Piombo and Giorgio Vasari then a young man, who afterwards told the story. The Pope's proposal of that competition savours of the nineteenth century, rather than of the sixteenth. It took place however, no opportunity being given to Sangallo to design another cornice; which adds another element to the coarseness and injustice of the whole proceeding. Michelangelo's victory in the competition has been vaunted as if he had been matched with equals, which was not the case.

The criticism,[1] written on Sangallo's design for the cornice of the Farnese palace, is entirely technical in its nature and comprehensible only to those versed in the subject, but it has this peculiar interest that it shows the nature of Michelangelo's study of architecture and the progress which he had made since his early efforts. He commences by quoting the authority of Vitruvius, he then goes minutely into questions regarding the general design and fitness of a plan, insisting with much iteration on the importance of each separately and in combination, and he dwells with emphasis on the numeric proportions which the parts should bear to the whole. On this subject in particular, the remarks which he makes on his great contemporary are such as with perfect justice may be applied to the details of his own early attempt in architectural design, the Laurentian Library.

[1] The original, written in the hand of Michelangelo, is in the possession of the Cavaliere Giuseppe Palagi. Florence.

Whilst thus severe upon others it is not to be forgotten that he was a severe critic of himself. He has represented himself as an old man in a child's go-cart with the motto « I still learn. » No artist ever was more conscious than Michelangelo of the necessity of ceaseless study. It never occurred to him that the possession of aptitude, genius and such great faculties as he must have known were his, placed him above this necessity. Brought up to be a sculptor and preferring that art, and refusing to admit that either painting or architecture was « his profession » he mastered both these arts; painting with comparative facility as he had been prepared for its practice in early life; architecture by a long course of self instruction and observation in a hard school and under the necessity of obeying the arbitrary will of a succession of Pontiffs, bent upon employing him as an architect. There can be no doubt that at first this was very distasteful to him and that he was made an architect against his will, but when compelled to consider the pursuit of architecture a duty, how admirable his conduct, how determined his resolution to conquer difficulties, there is no finer episode in the life of any artist, than Michelangelo's devotion to his duties as engineer and architect in the quarries of Carrara and Serravezza.

The defence of the States of the Church and of Rome divided the attention of Pope Paul with the decoration of the sacred city. He fortified Ancona and Civitavecchia and appointed a commission of experienced military officers under the presidency of his son Pierluigi Farnese to consider the defences of the Leonine city, which in the time of Clement had proved to be so inadequate, and had exposed the Papacy and Rome to such deplorable calamities.

The commissioners were Alessandro Vitello an experienced officer and Giovanfrancesco Montemellino an Engineer and officer of Artillery, Antonio da Sangallo was the architect.

The meetings of this commission were frequently held in the presence of the Pope who took a strong interest in their proceedings. The President Pierluigi Farnese and Montemellino were strongly of opinion that the defences should be restricted in their extent. Hence the erection of the Porta Santo Spirito and the curtains and bastions still existing, between the Borgo and that part of Trastevere, which runs along the skirts of the Janiculum and parallel to the Tiber.

Pierluigi Farnese being elected Duke of Parma and Piacenza left Rome, but did not cease to manifest the interest which he took in the fortifications and he corresponded with the Commissary Mochi whose official position enabled him to give him information. By a letter of the seventh of September 1545 he gave the following account of the condition of these important works:

« With the exception of the magnificent Doric gateway and the curtain extending to the river, the work is abandoned. »[1]

Michelangelo whose reputation as a military Engineer had been established at Florence, was appointed one of the consulting Architects to the Commissioners, Vasari does not say at what time, but as he opposed the design for the walls projected by Sangallo, it seems probable that his appointment cannot have taken place at an early period of 1545 as these works were carried on to a certain extent before he objected to the plans, probably just before the letter of Mochi from which the above extract is taken, which shows that some advance had been made, but that operations were arrested in September.

At one of the meetings in the presence of the Pope, Michelangelo expressed his dissent from the plans of Sangallo, who irritated by his opposition reminded him « that he was a painter and sculptor but not a military engineer » to which mistaken

[1] Amadio Ronchini. Fortifications of Rome time of Paul III. V. I, p. 168.

assertion he warmly replied, alluding to his well known services at Florence. The dispute became so warm that the Pope abruptly dismissed the meeting.

Michelangelo immediately prepared a plan to illustrate the advice which he gave and to indicate clearly the errors committed by Sangallo, he submitted it to the Pope; hence probably the alteration in the works alluded to by Mochi in writing to the Duke of Parma.

Michelangelo's labours were however interrupted by illness in the month of January 1546 and the attack was so severe that the report of his death was spread abroad and reached Florence and his nephew Lionardo hastened to Rome to see him. The attack must have been of a very serious and alarming nature for Michele Guicciardini the husband of Lionardo's sister Francesca wrote thus to Giovan Simone Buonarroti:

« Since I wrote to you, I had news from Niccolò Buondelmonte that Michelangelo was dead and that Lionardo had not arrived in time, he being already dead, I leave it to you to think what has been the effect of this news on Francesca. The same evening I received a letter directed to me by Bartolomeo Rati, who is in the shop of Francesco and Averardo Rati, by which came information from Rome that the medical men had freed him of illness. God grant that it be so.» [1]

This illness was short as well as severe. On the thirty-first of December he had written to Lionardo regarding the purchase of a house, preferring that in the Via Ghibellina, and on the ninth of the following January he again wrote:

«Lionardo. «I gave to Messer Luigi Del Riccio one hundred crowns in gold, which will be paid to you in Florence, to complete the sum of a thousand crowns promised you. Go to Piero di Gino Capponi and they will be paid to you, Messer Luigi will

[1] The Buonarroti Archives.

write my mind to you, for I do not feel well and cannot write, however I am cured, and do not suffer more, God be thanked: thus I thank Him, do thou so likewise.

I am resolved besides this money to provide also for Giovansimone and Gismondo one thousand crowns each, three thousand amongst you but in common, with this condition that the money be well invested in something useful, to bring you an income and to keep you at home. This letter is for you all and as I have nothing more to say, God be with you.» [1]

I MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI
Rome.

To my dearest Lionardo, as my son.
Florence.

It is pleasant to read this contrast to the letters quoted a few pages back, the correspondence of Michelangelo is full of similar generous and affectionate communications to his relatives.

[1] The Buonarroti Archives. Published by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 185.

Chapter XIX

During the illness of Michelangelo, being unable to attend to the military works near Santo Spirito, the following account of their progress was written by the Commissary Mochi to the Duke of Parma, in which full justice is done to the magnificent gate designed by Sangallo, which had it been finished would have been the grandest of which Rome could boast.

Rome, 4th January 1546.

«With regard to the fortifications of the borgo, the works have been stopped everywhere, except at the gate and foundation of the curtain at Santo Spirito, already laid as far as the river. I think that we shall have the gate up and in a defensible state by the end of April. As a Doric gate it is superb and appropriately ornamented with columns, architraves, friezes, with great mouldings and pinnacles, and on each side of the archway are niches with colossal statues.

Statues larger than life will be erected on the top, and magnificent ornaments of novel design together with the arms of His Holiness. Besides it will be a vigorous military work with its shot-holes in front and on the flanks.»[1]

He then describes the excellent drawbridges. It is evident however that his description was taken from the model or drawings and not from the actual gate, as its present state shows that it was not carried so far, whilst there is no reason to think that any part of it was taken down.

Considered exclusively as a work of architecture, this gateway is a monument of the genius, taste and learning of Antonio da Sangallo. Its harmonious proportions, its grand massive details so evidently designed with a view to the purpose it was to serve as a city gate, may be accepted as evidence that the severe and condemnatory report of Michelangelo upon his design for the cornice of the Palazzo Farnese must have been unjust to Sangallo's merits. It overshoots the mark in its severity, and is rather the expression of the judgment of a rival, than of an umpire. There is no architectural work of Michelangelo of a similar class which shows a greater knowledge of the principles of design, than this gate of Santo Spirito. The description of Mochi proves that had it been completed, the decorations would have been extravagant, considering its military use. Still it was the custom of architects at that time and for some time afterwards, to combine defensive and offensive military conditions and details with columns, niches, statues, sculptured coats of arms and pinnacles, more dangerous in reality to the garrison, than defensive, in case of attack, and which a few shots would have reduced to fragments.

[1] Amadio Ronchini. «Il Montemellino di Perugia e le fortificazioni di Roma al tempo di Paolo III, nel giornale di erudizione artistica. Perugia, 1872, p. 166-67.»

Michelangelo must have recovered from his dangerous illness in February, for in that month it appears that he attended a meeting of the Commissioners on the fortifications, to which he alludes in a letter dated the 26th of February 1546:

«Monsignore Castellano. With regard to the model, about which there was a difference of opinion yesterday, I did not say all that was on my mind, as I am requested to do by your Signory, because I thought that it might offend those persons for whom I have a great regard, including Captain Giovanfrancesco Molino, with whom in some things I do not agree. With regard to the bastions which are begun, I think that there are good and forcible reasons to continue them, especially as by not doing so worse might come of it, for the variety of opinions and models confuse and irritate the Pope, who thus may be able to resolve on nothing, and so do neither one thing nor another, which would be a serious misfortune and little for the honour of His Holiness. I think that the works should be carried on, I do not say as they are begun, but following the inclination of the ascent, improving without injuring what is done with the aid of Captain Giovanfrancesco. If, as is reported, the present direction is changed and Captain Giovanfrancesco is appointed, whom I hold to be skilful and honest in all things, this I am willing to do, I offer myself for the honour of the Pope, and if asked to do so I will act not as a colleague but as an assistant.

From the Spinelli to Castello I would not make anything but a fosse, for the covered way will suffice if it is repaired.»[1]

There must be at all times risk of error in expressing a positive opinion, where there are so few documents upon which to

[1] The Buonarroti Archives.

base it, but this letter makes an unpleasant impression. There is observable in it that dislike of Sangallo, which induces Michelangelo on a mere report to commit himself to an offer evidently meant to replace him, whereas nothing was further from the Pope's mind than his dismissal, for he continued in the service of the Commissioners till his death in the autumn of the current year.

After all, Michelangelo did not propose material changes, for he evidently adhered to the opinions of the Commissioners, that fortifications should be erected in the hollow near the Tiber and thence upwards, as if the enemies most to be dreaded were the Trasteverini and not a foreign foe, who would attack the city not here, but from the Campagna, as happened even within the present century.

Shortly after these events, Michelangelo received a gratifying communication from Francis I, king of France, who, having occasion to send the eminent Bolognese artist Francesco Primaticcio, then in his service, to Italy, deputed him to procure for him a work of Michelangelo, to whom he directed a letter which Primaticcio was to deliver in person. If he could not procure a work by Michelangelo himself, he was then to cause copies to be made of the Madonna della Pietà, and the statue of Christ in the Church of Sta Maria sopra Minerva.

Michelangelo on the twenty-sixth April 1546 wrote the following letter in reply to that of king Francis:

«Sacred Majesty. I know not which affects me most, the act of grace or my surprise that your Majesty should deign to write to such as I am, and still more to request a specimen of my work. But however this may be, I am desirous that your Majesty should know that I have long wished to serve you in my art, but have not had the opportunity of doing so, your

Majesty not having been in Italy. Now I am old and I am occupied for some months by Pope Paul, but if after that, life is left to me, that which I have so long desired to do, I shall do my best to achieve. That is a work in marble, a work in bronze and a painting. Should death interrupt this desire, then if it be possible to sculpture or paint in the other world, I shall not fail to do so, where no one becomes old.» [1]

Death did intervene to put an end to the gratification of the wishes of the art-loving Francis, but it was his own death, which took place in May 1547. When Michelangelo wrote this letter, the expression «some months» hardly represented the time which he was to be occupied by the commissions of the Pope, but he not unfrequently expressed himself in this sanguine way as to the duration of his work, than which no stronger example is recorded, than his belief at one time that he could complete the sepulchre of Julius in five years.

Michelangelo's peace of mind was this year disturbed, as it had been before, by the questions which arose regarding his claims upon the ferry on the Po, near Piacenza.

These rights were first disputed by Beatrice Trivulzi, who placed an opposition ferry on the spot, greatly to his damage. This lady's claim being got rid of, the Commune of Piacenza came forward, and was with no little difficulty, and by the exercise of pressure, induced to leave the tormented Michelangelo in possession, but thereon, Baldassare and Niccolò Pusterlà brothers, came forward and instituted proceedings for the recovery of their alleged rights to the ferry, which dated from many years back. On the death of Duke Pierluigi Farnese on the tenth September 1547, Piacenza passed under the power of

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

Charles V, and Michelangelo's claims were finally disallowed, and a source of income closed, from which he had derived very little advantage and infinite vexation and annoyance.

The Pope, desirous of at least partly making up this loss of income, offered him a Chancellory at Rimini, which, however, Michelangelo did not accept. Having become architect of St Peters without emolument, he would accept of no annual payment which might lead to misconstruction, but notwithstanding his disinterested conduct, he did not escape misrepresentation and his malevolent enemy Bandinelli, as related by Vasari, asserted that he declined the amount of revenue sent to him by the Pope, but accepted it when doubled. This slander is incidentally refuted by the expressions of a private letter to his nephew Lionardo, dated the tenth of August 1548, in which referring to a purchase of land, Michelangelo remarks: «If there is an opportunity of an investment in an estate not more than ten or fifteen miles from Florence, I would make it, for having lost the income from the Po, I must provide a revenue which cannot be taken from me.» [1]

The death of Antonio da Sangallo, which took place at Terni in the autumn of 1546, led to important changes in the position of Michelangelo and added materially to the extent of his work and of his responsibilities. His influence became paramount with respect to the fortifications, the Palazzo Farnese was at once transferred to his care, but his appointment as architect to St Peters was the highest honour and the most important commission which could be conferred upon him. The Board intrusted with the direction of the works hesitated as to the selection of an architect, but Paul, guided, as Vasari expresses it, by the Almighty, cut their deliberations short by nominat-

[1] Letters of Michelangelo. Edited by Gaetano Milanesi. Letter LCIII, p. 229.

ing Michelangelo. It is a remarkable circumstance that on this, as upon other previous occasions he objected to the appointment, renewing his statement that « architecture was not his art. » No one could judge better than Michelangelo himself of the difficulties which must be encountered in conducting the erection of St Peters, not only in an architectural sense, but in respect of the rivalries, opposition and intrigues which he must encounter. He was now an old man, and his late illnesses made him aware of the presence and progress of a dangerous and insidious malady which must more and more unfit him for exertion. The Pope however, whose confidence in him was unbounded, was resolved that he should be the architect of the greatest church in Christendom and Michelangelo yielded, on the noble condition that his services should be gratuitous and dedicated to the honour of God and His great Apostle St Peter. Apart from the devotional feeling which guided him on this occasion there was also wisdom in the resolution, because he was aware that even from the commencement of the enterprise there had been much peculation and dishonest gain. Michelangelo was essentially upright in character, he despised dishonest actions and by his refusal of a salary he was enabled more vigorously to repress the malpractices of others. His disinterested conduct might also, if it did not disarm his adversaries, at least weaken their assaults. On these grand terms he became architect of the Basilica of St Peters.

Michelangelo speaks of himself at this time as an old man and anticipates the possibility of his death, but he was still full of energy and he never had been so much occupied as he was now, nor with such various employments. He painted in the Pauline Chapel, watched over the progress of the fortifications of the Leonine city, made designs for the improvement and extension of the Farnese Palace and girded himself for the grand

work of St Peters, thinking how he would raise the Pantheon in the air and construct that unequalled cupola which is the triumph of his genius as an architect.

The Farnese Palace when it was placed in his hands was far advanced. It has been esteemed by architects of all nations one of the noblest examples of modern domestic architecture which exists; there has been however some tendency to overlook the merits of Sangallo the first designer of this magnificent mansion, overshadowed as they have been by the importance assigned to the work of Michelangelo, who introduced the great window over the entrance, completed the upper story and crowned it with its magnificent cornice, whilst his design is also obvious in the two upper arcades of the court. But his genius is described as having shown itself in the grandest manner by a design for uniting the palace with gardens on the other side of the river by a bridge, which he planned.

The Italian palazzo or aristocratic mansion is the original type of most modern town residences throughout Europe. In its general plan it consists most frequently of an internal court open to the heavens, surrounded by halls, corridors and rooms of various sizes and uses, the external elevations being in most instances handsome and of imposing size. In Rome the models principally imitated by architects in their designs, both for the courts and the exteriors, were the remains of ancient theatres and amphitheatres, especially the Coliseum. Of its external arcaded, story-divided elevation, the famous court of the Farnese is almost a reproduction. Had the architects and their Pontifical employers of those days, been content to borrow ideas of design from the Coliseum, their names might have been without reproach, but they unscrupulously plundered the materials also and ruined their model. The vast blocks of yellow travertine of which the Farnese is built were shamefully taken from the

great amphitheatre, which for so long was considered nothing more than a quarry by a people who once were Romans.[1]

Not only the courts but the external elevations, are frequently imitative of the same Roman examples, the arches being omitted and the spaces occupied by the noble windows of the Renaissance architecture.

The Italian mansion was a wonderful advance on the medieval fortified residence of Gothic design. Magnificent portals, inviting free entrance took the place of gateways with elaborate contrivances to shut people out. Superb flights of broad and easily ascended steps were substituted for steep narrow stairs. Windows no longer little better than port-holes, became wide and lofty apertures admitting floods of light to spacious chambers of varied forms and elegant proportions, very unlike the vaulted and often dungeon like rooms and halls of the old castles.

If again these modern dwellings be compared with those of ancient Rome they will be found to be incomparably superior even to the palaces of the mighty Cæsars, the ruins of which occupy the Palatine. There were some courts and halls in the ancient palaces of an imposing character architecturally, but the rooms for living in were very inferior to those of the modern dwelling, in size, lighting, ventilation and convenient access. In these important conditions the palazzo far outshines its predecessor, whilst the advance in a higher civilization is marked emphatically by the better provision made for lodging the humbler members of the family.

If the architectural decorations be carefully compared, the sculpture of the Renaissance is far more varied in invention and more skilfully and gracefully executed than that of Roman times. There are some grand specimens of Roman work in the remains

[1] Popes and Princes plundered spite of Pasquin. But we also have our Barberini in despite of protests in Parliament.

of fora and temples, but those observable in fragments of minor edifices and in the palaces of the Cæsars, show that poverty of invention and mechanical execution prevailed. The architectural ornamental carving of the Renaissance, owed much of its graceful design and delicate execution to its inheritance of ideas from medieval times, during which much study and observation of nature led the carvers of ornament so far in advance of those of ancient Rome, who were mere imitators of old models which they repeated without variation except that caused by growing incapacity.

The painted decorations of the Renaissance surpass all known specimens of ancient Roman art. The artists observed the ancient examples, which were uncovered from time to time, with ardent curiosity and admiration, they imitated the design very closely and modified their own methods of painting to attain as far as possible a resemblance to those of the old works. This is very observable in the famous arabesques of the Loggia of the Vatican executed under the direction of Raffael. The ancient and brilliant method of giving a lustrous surface to the plaster, and the richly loaded touch of old encaustic are carefully imitated in the modern ornaments, but the artists who did this, shot ahead of their models in invention, drawing, variety and skill of execution.

If the walls painted with figure subjects at the two periods be compared, the superiority of modern art is incontestable. It may be thought that the comparison is unfair, but it is not altogether so. The pictures usually found on ancient walls are known to be in many instances copies, — imperfect it may be, — of celebrated compositions by ancient masters; the agreement observable amongst these copies by decorators shows in the clearest manner, that ancient painters were ignorant of important elements and conditions necessary to perfect art, and

therefore they were inferior to the painters of the Renaissance who exemplify in their pictures all the resources of art, whether dependent on science or derived from the observation of nature.

Objection has been taken to the formality of Italian architecture, but the capability of the style for picturesque variety of outline is observable in numberless villas in all parts of the Peninsula. The long lines of houses of identical design in British towns, with windows and cornices on a level, and a weary depressing repetition of similar forms, are not representations either of the spirit or the letter of Italian architecture. In Italian cities if the palazzi be considered separately, they may appear formal to some eyes, but no two in a street are alike in design or dimension, the variety is infinite, the picturesque combinations are charming, and some of the most admired and beautiful views in Italy are those in which city and landscape are combined. In their interesting and wonderful variety of feature they form complete contrasts to the formal modern towns, of so called Italian architecture, built under different conditions of climate, of economy and mode of life.

In those parts of the Farnese Palace to be attributed to Michelangelo his design is easily recognised. In a certain direction he had advanced in knowledge since the erection of the Laurentian Library. He had studied Vitruvius, and made himself acquainted with numerical proportion, but his taste remained the same. The cornice is magnificent, and it is matter of astonishment that an architect capable of so noble a design should have thought of and constructed the windows beneath it. If his object in arching the tops was to admit more light, he could have obtained that object by making them the same size as those below, there is plenty of space and the upper story instead of its mean appearance, would thus have had a dignity worthy of the crowning cornice.

Michelangelo's taste in architecture leant to the picturesque, which even led him to violate constructive conditions in decorative details. Up to this time he had by no means been content to imitate the symmetrical and severe general forms of Roman architecture of the best period. He preferred instead, varied and pictorial composition in which the use and meaning of important features and details were apparently forgotten. This is particularly illustrated in his adaptation of consoles or brackets. As for example, in the hall of the Laurentian Library, large brackets of magnificent design are introduced, which are entirely useless as supports. The same features in ancient examples when applied to the architecture of door or window, prop the cornice, which is their function, but those placed by him in the upper windows of the court of the Farnese Palace, besides being of quaint and complicated design, carry nothing but the slight upper moulding of the architrave. His love of a broken and varied surface induced him to superimpose decoration over decoration till utility and meaning were lost. But as in his compositions of the human figure whilst sentiment is frequently unfavourably impressed by bizzarre details, the grandeur of the whole composition is soul-stirring, so is it with his design in architecture, the masses are dignified and impressive.

Writing to Pierluigi Farnese in 1547 Pietro or Paolo Mochi, Commissary of the fortifications, gives the following account of the progress made with the palace whilst it was under the direction of Michelangelo.

« To afford you some amusement I give you an account of your palace.... The front is almost finished including the upper row of windows,[1] the great cornice only is wanting.... a piece of it has been completed experimentally on the side towards

[1] This shows that they are by Michelangelo.

San Geronimo to satisfy his Beatitude, whom we accompanied in state within. The cloister is surrounded with its colonade, and the rooms towards San Geronimo are almost up, with the chapel at the end of the corridor, and will soon be habitable. Towards Catena and Todeschi the wine cellar, store room and kitchen, both outwardly and concealed, are finished, and the greater part of the cellars also. The water cistern is the largest and most commodious that I ever saw, with ancient earthenware conduits of great size. So if they thus continue to build, it will soon be up. The office of the sacred Penitentiary will be made in the lower chambers.... the iron gratings on the windows are almost all placed. The (antique) head, which I wrote to your Excellency was in the castle, has been carried to the palace, and the figures of the Antonine column, and those which were in the house of the Sassi, amougst them a Hermaphrodite which is incomparable, and another great one of porphyry, and many other statues and busts, which are excessively beautiful, are now in the palace and every day more are added.»[1]

Another letter of the same Commissary Mochi refers to Michelangelo's work upon the fortifications of the borough. In these he was associated with Meleghino, but such was the confidence of the Pope in his skill, that he gave orders that everything should be done according to his design, and the letter of Mochi gives an interesting insight into his knowledge at this time of military engineering and his opinions on the subject of fortification. The letter is dated the second of March 1547:

« With regard to the fortifications of the borgo, the gate of Santo Spirito is closed, but the upper part is expected to be finished quickly; it is a beautiful and spirited Doric gateway,

[1] Amadio Ronchini. Ed. cit., V. I, p. 168.

which would have deserved to stand in a more honourable place near to St Peters, where Ambassadors come from all Christendom. But we hope that his Beatitude will make one there also. At the Spinelli it is purposed to build the curtain towards the tower of St Nicholas V of saintly memory; and although Monsignor Michelangelo has taken the place of Sangallo, under the direction of Meleghino, his Beatitude has commanded that as far as regards the design, Monsignor Michelangelo is to be obeyed and no other. As Monsignor Michelangelo is opposed to the plan, which it was intended to carry out, his Beatitude has given orders to await the coming of Signor Alessandro Vitelli. The opinion of Monsignor Michelangelo is this. Where the fire of the flank already ordered would cover the curtain of Nicholas, he would on the same ground make an intermediate work in advance of the curtain, with two flanks or bulwarks or platforms, with eight embrasures four on each side, above and below; the fire of the one would cover the gate at the Spinelli, of the other the curtain of St Nicholas, he asserts that the fire as at first designed would be unfavourable to us, whilst one battery was not enough to defend the angle of the Spinelli owing to the great distance.

The bulwark of the Gallinaro is almost levelled with the earth on two faces and it is intended to revet it and to use it as a terreplein.»[1]

Michelangelo did not however continue to direct the works, he had too much to do to give the necessary attention and the Pope judiciously appointed Iacopo Fusto Castriotto of Urbino, an officer experienced in war, to superintend the fortifications, who at once showed his wisdom and science by abandoning those in the low ground and commencing a new line of defences

[1] Amadio Ronchini. Ed. cit., V. 1, p. 167.

on the crest of the high ground, where they were really wanted and so providing in an efficent manner for the protection of the Leonine city and the Vatican.

Had Michelangelo been in the flower of his age and in perfect health, his avocations when old and oppressed with a painful and threatening disease would have excited the justest admiration for his genius, energy, fertility of resource, and capacity for varied work. Under the circumstances of his age and health this sentiment is increased to wonder in contemplating his powers and the freshness and vigour of the intellect dwelling within his now enfeebled and decaying frame. In addition to the occupation of his time recounted in this chapter, the charge of St Peters pressed upon his attention, a charge involving, not as might at first sight appear reasonable and natural, the carrying out of well-considered plans and designs, long before agreed upon, and now in progress of realization, but a new creation in which he was more hampered than aided, by the confused and in most respects ill-devised proceedings of his predecessors.

A history of the gigantic enterprise over which Michelangelo became the ruling spirit at seventy-two years of age, would fill a volume such as this; therefore it is not possible to do justice to it or to the genius employed upon it, since Julius determined to replace the ancient Basilica with a new and hitherto unequalled temple in honour of the Apostle St Peter.

A number of drawings and sketches by several of the great artists employed on this immense edifice, are preserved in the Gallery of the Uffizi in Florence, and certainly one of the impressions made by these drawings is that of surprise. Each of the successive architects appears, in a great measure to have disregarded the intentions of his precursor, and rather to have considered how he could alter, than how he could carry out the plans confided to him.

Bramante evidently started with a very complete and well considered plan, which however was deficient in constructive solidity, and made more so by the inadequate manner in which he laid the foundations and carried up the work, so that his successors, besides making modifications of his plan in their different views of taste and fitness, were much occupied strengthening and repairing the imperfections of his construction which soon afforded evidence of its weakness. He began to build having only partially removed the ancient fabric and carried up his piers, whilst yet many of the forest of columns, which formed the principal features of the venerable Basilica, were still standing. In removing these and innumerable other precious examples of the skill of ancient artists, he showed neither taste nor reverence. Probably he was hurried by the impatient Julius, and the question presents itself what is to be thought of Pontiff and architect, who in a few years could break down, ruin and destroy more works of art, more memorials of old times, more monuments of successive Popes and of others thought worthy of record, and could obliterate more well marked footsteps of history than whole generations of vandals? A claim has been advanced in these pages as in those of other writers in favour of Julius II as more justly entitled to have his name inscribed on the century, than that of Leo X, but however unworthy the latter may be of so great an honour, in denying it to Julius, history has avenged his ruthless destruction of the ancient Basilica of St Peter, and the monuments which it contained.

Apart from such considerations as these and the regrets which the abolition of the old church causes, the merits of Bramante's design are described in terms of glowing eulogium by Michelangelo in a letter to Bartolomeo Ammannati, made only the more striking by the generosity which could cast aside the remembrance of cruel persecution:

Rome, ... 1555.

«Messer Bartolomeo, dear friend,

It cannot be denied that Bramante was as admirable an architect as ever lived, from the time of the ancients till now. He laid the first plan of St Peters, in no complex or confused way, but with clearness and precision, isolated and with daylight all round so that it did no harm to the palace (of the Vatican), and so designed that it was held to be beautiful as is still evident, and thus whoever has departed from the design of Bramante, as Sangallo has done, has left true architecture on one side; and that it is thus, every unprejudiced person may see in his model.[1] He, with that circle which he makes outside, in the first place deprives the design of Bramante of light, and not only this, but in his own there is a want of light above and below, with so many hiding places as to provide convenience for the performance of the worst crimes, for hiding convicts, coining false money, seducing foolish nuns and other abominations, so that in the evening when the church is to be closed, at least twenty-five men would be required to look round and search that no one remained hidden, and they would find it a difficult task. There would be this other inconvenience that in the circuit which the model makes outside the building of Bramante, it would be necessary to take down the Pauline Chapel, the rooms for Plumbing, the court of the Ruota and many others: I doubt even if the Sixtine Chapel would escape entirely. With regard to the portion of the outer circle which is erected and which they say cost a hundred thousand crowns, this is not true, for it could be made with sixteen thousand; and by taking it down there would be no great loss, for the stones of which it

[1] The model of Antonio Sangallo is preserved in the octagon of St Gregory on the top of St Peters with other models near it.

is built and the foundations come most conveniently to hand, and the fabric would be improved to the value of two hundred thousand crowns, and three centuries of duration. This is what appears to me, without prejudice, for to conquer to me is loss. If you can make the Pope understand this, you will do me pleasure, at present I do not feel well.»

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO.

« Adhering to the model of Sangallo, it follows that all that has been done in my time, must be taken down, which would be a very great loss.»[1]

This very remarkable letter presents not merely a severe criticism of the design of Sangallo, but a sad picture of the habits of the time and of the delinquencies which were perpetrated in churches, for there can be no doubt that the objections made by Michelangelo were founded upon his knowledge of prevalent customs.[2] « For to conquer to me is loss » this enigmatical phrase was explained in a true sense at a later time. Michelangelo's demolitions exposed him to strong attacks on all sides and to hostile reports from the Commissioners or Deputies.

When at a previous time Sangallo on his part entered upon his charge of the fabric of St Peters he also had prepared a report for the information of the Pope, which it may be useful and interesting to contrast with that by Michelangelo:

« Chiefly moved by regret, and to act for the honour of God and St Peter, and for the credit and service of your Holiness

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

[2] The illumination of the cross at night in St Peters was given up within the present century on account of the delinquencies committed in the dark parts of the church.

rather than for my advantage, I make known how the money is spent in St Peters with little benefit or honour of God and of your Holiness, being in fact thrown away. The reasons I here assign:

In the first place the general plan, now in a confused state, must be restored to order and harmony: there must also be arrangements to form a large chapel, for there are none but little chapels, whilst order and uniformity do not exist nor a perfect distribution.

In the second place, the pilasters of the nave are larger than those of the tribune, whereas they ought to be less or equal.

Thirdly. The external pilasters which are Doric must be proportioned; they are twelve heads in height, whereas they should be only seven. [1]

Fourthly. To arrange whether those within are to have socles or not, on account of the inconvenience which they produce in the chapels.

Fifthly. If the work is carried on as it has been begun the nave will be so long high and narrow that it will look like a lane.

Sixthly. The said nave will be very dark, consequently the rest of the Church will also be so, for good lights cannot be introduced.

Seventhly. To remedy the false position of the tribune and to make arrangements that the pilasters which are executed may be placed over the arches. I say nothing of the ornament, it may be as rich as may be desired.

With regard to all these matters, they may be easily remedied and corrected and good proportions arranged.

[1] Sangallo must mean diameters as the Romans carried their version of the Doric order up to seven and even eight diameters. He does not say who was responsible for making them twelve, but the statement shows the incapacity of one or other of his predecessors. The order has vanished from the present building, but the designs of Sangallo show a Doric which is excessively heavy.

I propose also to remove the doors which lead from chapel to chapel, they look like shot-holes and are discreditable.

I also am of opinion that the hemicycle at the head of each transept is false, not but that the workmanship is good and beautiful, but the design is so imperfect that it does not unite with the rest which is objectionable.

Item, the cornices of marble erected by Raffael in the chapels are false and have not the proper projections.

Item, the cornices of travertine by Raffael are false where placed in their relations to the pilasters beneath, with their bases and capitals.»

These reports of two such eminent men, which differ so fundamentally in their statements of the original plan and design, show that hitherto the building of St Peters must have been conducted in a very haphazard way. The difference between them may be accounted for by the circumstance that Michelangelo limited his remarks to Bramante's design, whereas Sangallo described the church in the state to which it had been reduced by other architects.

The great model at Rome made under the direction of Sangallo shows that he fell into some of the errors which he condemns. His church, if built according to his design, would have been deficient in light, and divided into nave and two aisles by numerous and heavy piers, so that there would nave been no good or general view embracing a considerable portion of the interior, but like the great hall at Karnak it would have presented a succession of « lanes » without the same excuse, the Egyptian being ignorant of the arch, as a substitute for the architrave.

Thus Sangallo saw the errors of his predecessors but he introduced others of equal magnitude according to the opinion of his successor Michelangelo. His model however is deserving of atten-

tive study and so is his large drawing in the Gallery of Florence. He anticipated Sir Christopher Wren, in what has been held to be a fault of his beautiful design, by dividing his exterior into more than one story whereas the interior is one only. Sangallo however went beyond Sir Christopher, for he proposed two stories and an intersole externally. The two prodigious classic steeples which he meant to carry up on each side of the front of his proposed church are also anticipations of the frequent designs for belfrys of the great Englishman and his successors. Those of Sangallo were objected to from their resemblance to Gothic bell-towers. The Italian critics showed their entire ignorance of those magnificent features of medieval design, but their objection to the system introduced by Sangallo of piling temple over temple to form a belfry was sound. The proposed dome of Sangallo, for he anticipated Michelangelo in the idea of a cupola as did Bramante and Baldassare Peruzzi, would have been dark and heavy. It is in fact well that the world escaped his design and gained that which exists, even with all its faults.

When Michelangelo commenced his work, like his predecessors he also was obliged to strengthen the badly constructed piers that they might carry his proposed cupola, designed of a magnitude greatly in excess of theirs He must have been familiar with the numerous drawings and models which they had left, which were preserved in the office of works of the Commissioners of St Peters, and no doubt profited by the observation of their errors. All had contemplated domes, but their designs were squat and inelegant in form, and when he contrasted them with the pantheon of Agrippa, he saw their inferiority to that superb building which he boldly said that he would raise into the air, and thus he designed and so far built the cupola which has immortalized him. Standing under that glorious dome, although partially altered from his design the man

of true sentiment, with heart and soul must render homage to the superhuman genius of the aged man who imagined it and with such self-sacrifice and true devotion carried it up in honour of God and his Apostle.

The question also presents itself to the mind, when and where did its great architect acquire the mathematical knowledge needful to its design and structure? The imperfectly educated boy had no opportunity of studying geometry. The deficient knowledge of perspective observable in his early works, has been purposely alluded to, as showing how little he knew even of the elements of geometry in the early part of his career. The statement of his enemy Bramante, that although he might be able to design a picture to be painted on the surface of a perpendicular wall, he was afraid to grapple with the difficulty of designing for the curved surface of a vault, was a very significant observation, and must have been based on Bramante's observation of the state of Michelangelo's knowledge of the laws of perspective. In the Sixtine Chapel he was brought face to face with the difficulties which his enemy thought would conquer him, and convict him of ignorance; but Bramante underrated the capacity and resources of Michelangelo. In the specifications for the monument of Julius, indications may be observed of unsettled ideas of perspective, but a higher knowledge is exhibited in the design for the vault, and this fact alone would serve to prove, that that work was carefully planned and deliberately executed. The gradations in the sizes of the figures in the last judgment finally show Michelangelo's matured knowledge. We do not know when he studied mathematics, but his works indicate increasing acquirements and the cupola of St Peters remains a monument of their extent and solidity.

Amongst the various schemes for the embellishment of Rome, undertaken during the active pontificate of Paul III, there was

no one more interesting than that to revive the architectural splendours of the Capitol. The site of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was occupied by the Church of Ara Cœli, the flank of the famous hill which confronted the ancient Forum, was faced with structures in part dating from the city's earliest days, on the opposite side a steep descent led to the modern streets which spread northwards over the level ground of the Campus Martius, whilst towards the Tiber, the surface of the mount was covered as now, with houses and orchards, in one of which is shown the precipitous Tarpeian, its height diminished to a leap by accumulations at its base.

A society was formed with the approbation of the Pope, to erect public buildings worthy of the site, and Michelangelo who was a member of the patriotic society, was chosen to be the architect. The opportunity offorded him was a great one, calculated to excite his imagination and to induce him to put forth all his powers. Whatever may be thought of the details of the design of the wonderful old man, there can be no question that the general masses are dignified and imposing. The entire idea was not made perfect till the reign of Gregory XIII, when the sloping ascent with its broad and easy steps, its massive ballustrade of travertine, its pedestals bearing Egyptian lions of basalt, Roman statues, Trophies, and Columns which once marked the distances on the Appian, was completed.

On the summit of this magnificent ascent, is the square of the Capitol, with its twin palaces on either hand, and in front that of the official who represented in his solitary person all the Conscript Fathers of the ancient Senate. However striking the architectural effect, the eye is first arrested and the attention fascinated by the unequalled equestrian statue of the philosophic Marcus Aurelius, which the taste of Michelangelo, brought from the wide space near the Lateran Palace and erected here on a

marble pedestal to form the central decorative feature of his design. A noble, double flight of steps, one of the great artist's happiest conceptions, leads up to the palace of the Senator, and a vast basin in front of it, is always filled with water, which reflects the statue of ancient Rome occupying the recess beyond, whilst two statues of nameless rivers repose on each side, one of them the ancient Marforio, whose wit is now as dry as his symbolical urn.

It needs but a glance at the similar palaces which now contain the Capitoline Museums, to see that when Michelangelo designed them, he was thinking of the external elevation of St Peters, for in the same style, Corinthian pilasters on pedestals surmounted by a massive entablature, comprise the entire height.

The pilasters decorate the faces of solid piers, the spaces between which are divided into two stories, the lower being an open portico, the façade formed by Ionic columns supporting an entablature placed between the great pilasters. Over its cornice and filling up the interval beneath the immense architrave of the Corinthian order, is the wall of the second story with its ballustrades and richly ornamented windows. On the summit of the entire composition pedestals bear up against the sky tiny statues of white marble, fragments of ancient Roman decoration.

Michelangelo thus gave his name and authority to a description of architectural design in which the aspect and proportions of the lofty order of a temple are combined with construction divided into separate floors, since so much abused in thousands of instances in every part of Europe. If in describing his design a suggestion may be hazarded, it would have been far more beautiful and constructively just, had the pilasters on the fronts of the piers been omitted.

It may be said, that the new Church of St Peter originated this unhappy style of external architecture. One vast height

within, with one order externally, the walls between the columns or pilasters of that order, being divided into three stories of windows. How inferior is this arrangement to the principle of design observed in medieval architecture by which one vast and mullioned opening, exquisitely designed, would have taken the place of the three apertures which admit too little light. If the Italian palazzo infinitely excelled the medieval castle, the grandest churches of the Renaissance fell far short of those of medieval times, whether in the skill with which they were constructed, or the taste with which they were designed. It is evident that the architects of St Peters were very inferior in constructive capacity to those of York Minster, the Cathedrals of Cologne, Bourges or Chartres, and other medieval churches.

If the decorative details of the Palaces of the Capitol be carefully examined, it will be seen that Michelangelo, as was his wont, made every effort to be original in his designs, although he condescended at times, to direct imitation. A prevalent ornament is the shell, frequently of gigantic size, some being apparently six feet in diameter. This was a step in the direction of so enlarging architectural ornament, including foliage animals and imaginary or human figures, that the largest buildings appear diminished in size when crowded with these gigantic details. Here again the medieval architects infinitely excelled those of the revival, by preserving proportions similar to those in nature both in their ornament and in their statues, thus indicating the true dimensions of their buildings with matchless skill. They not unfrequently diminished these proportions, but rarely if ever exceeded them.

By sketches in the Florentine Gallery and by fragments of Bramante's designs, it may be seen that he anticipated Michelangelo in the use of these enormous shells; there is a sketch which shows that he contemplated a shell big enough to serve as

the vault of an entire chapel. This fashion lasted for some time in Rome and is observable in a number of buildings there.

It has been seen that throughout his whole life, Michelangelo's study of nature was limited to that of the human figure. That he neglected landscape entirely, so that he could not paint a tree or plant of any kind is observable in his pictures; consequently he was shut out in his design of architectural ornament, from the only true source of that originality which he aimed at, he was constrained to limit himself to variations of the forms of Roman ornament, which he never improved but almost invariably deteriorated. Thus notwithstanding his unequalled intellectual power and skill as a designer, he failed in a comparatively humble branch of art, from the neglect of principles of design followed up with success by artists who in all else were so greatly his inferiors. In the architectural ornaments of Desiderio da Settignano may be observed the most exquisite ideal treatment of familiar plants which grow in Tuscany. By such simple means he thus excelled Michelangelo and enriched art with novel and beautiful forms and ideas, and he was one only of a number of excellent artists of the Renaissance who were distinguished in the same way, and who set an admirable example to the architects and decorators of all times.

The study of nature which Michelangelo admitted to be useful and needful to the architect is clearly expressed in a letter probably written in 1560, when the noble edifices on the Capitoline hill were in progress. It is thought to have been addressed to Cardinal De Carpi:

«Most Reverend My Lord. When a plan has diverse parts, all those which are of one quality or proportion must be adorned in a similar manner, as likewise their counterparts. But when the form of the plan is altered, it is not only permissible but necessary to change its adornment and at the same time its

counterparts, and the means of doing so are as free as can be wished. The nose is in the centre of the face and is independent of either eye, but one hand is bound to resemble the other, and one eye must be like the other being counterparts on equal sides. It is obvious that architectural members are derived from those of the human body. He who is not a good master of the figure and especially of anatomy cannot understand this.»

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI.

Michelangelo did not live to finish the buildings which he designed. He was succeeded as architect of the Capitol by Tommaso de' Cavalieri, by Vignola and Giacomo Della Porta and by other architects of less repute. The picturesque ascent was built by the orders of Gregory the XIII, and various Pontiffs including the active promoter of the adornment of Rome, Sixtus V, contributed in many ways to the completion of the palaces and the handsone approaches as these are now seen.

Chapter XX

During the progress of the works on which Michelangelo was so busily engaged for years in Rome, he carried on an active correspondence with relatives and friends, especially with his nephew Lionardo.

A number of the letters refer to such domestic matters as the receipt from his nephew of presents of wine, especially of that quality called Trebbiano, of fruit, cheeses and other articles, and he almost invariably notices the quantity and quality, enumerates the cheeses, the flasks and even counts the pears:

« I had the cask of pears, they were eighty-seven in number, I sent thirty-three to the Pope, he liked them very much and thought them beautiful. »[1] Michelangelo almost invariably shared the offerings with his friends. He refers in his correspondence to his age and growing infirmities, to his great physical sufferings from his depressing and painful malady and gives advice on various subjects of family interest and importance,

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

but he makes allusion to his works of art less frequently than could be desired, therefore the narrative has not been interrupted by the insertion of letters which although written during their progress throw little or no light upon them.

Some of the letters mention remittances, others refer to the purchase of property; Michelangelo thought it dangerous to keep sums of any amount in hand, money was safer invested: «I have thought of sending as much more money in two months, but it does not please me that you should keep it in the house for it is dangerous.»[1] At times he gives instructions as to charities. «With regard to the alms, to me it is enough to know that you have done what I wished and that the Monastery has received them without mention of my name. You write to me that you will give four crowns to that woman for the love of God, I am pleased, I wish to give fifty crowns for the love of God, part for the soul of Buonarroti thy father, part for my own. Try to find out some citizen in poverty, who has daughters to marry or to place in a convent, and give him help secretly; but beware of being taken in, and take a receipt and send it to me, I speak of citizens, for I know that when they are in poverty they are ashamed to beg.» Again: «It would gratify me if you would let me know if you hear of any noble citizen who is in extreme poverty, and especially of such as have children in the house, that I might aid them.»

«Take care that you give where there is want, and not for the sake of relationship or friendship, but for the love of God. Do not say whence the charity comes.»

His charities were not limited to his own countrymen; writing from Rome he says: «The money must be changed for bread, there is famine and if help is not given, the people will starve.»

[1] To avoid encumbering the pages with notes unless it is otherwise stated, all the letters quoted in this chapter are from the Buonarroti Archives published by Gaetano Milanesi, September 1875.

Michelangelo's sentiments on the subject of family descent, relationship and dignity were frequently expressed in his correspondence. It has been seen again and again how he «endured hardships, lacerated his body with hard labour, placed his life in a thousand dangers to aid his family» how he purchased property and gave the rental to his Father that he might «live like a gentleman.» His family pride is singularly illustrated in a letter to Lionardo of the second of May 1548: «Tell the priest (Fattucci) not to address: «Michelangelo Sculptor» for I am not known, but as Michelangelo Buonarroti; if a Florentine citizen wishes to have a picture painted for an altar let him find a painter, for I never was painter or sculptor as those who make merchandise. I have striven for the honour of my parents and my brothers, true I have served three Popes, but I was forced to do so.» This proud letter shows why so many commissions offered to Michelangelo were refused. That he loved his art there can be no question, but the spirit in which he would have preferred to exercise it is made apparent by these expressions, it was that in which he designed the Cupola of St Peters and watched over its building. He dwelt on this to him almost absorbing subject in writing to his nephew: «Some day when I have time, I shall inform you of our origin, whence we came and when we settled in Florence, of which perhaps you are ignorant.» He again wrote to his nephew saying that he had lately seen a volume of chronicles of Florence, in which it was stated, that about two centuries before, there had been a Buonarroti Simoni amongst the members of the Signory and afterwards a Simone Buonarroti, a Michele and a Francesco, but the history did not come down to Lionardo who was also of the Signory, and his grandfather: It is to be remarked that in this statement Michelangelo makes no reference whatever to the Canossa, or to his supposed connection with that family.

Determined if possible to restore the prosperity and status of his family, he began at an early period to buy land. He became possessor of the farm of Capiteto by purchase on the twenty-seventh of January 1506; of another La Loggia on the twenty-eighth May 1512 to which he added a piece of land on the twentieth of June following. In 1515 he bought a farm near the ancestral villa at Settignano. On the fourteenth of July 1517 he made his first purchase of land within the city, on which to build a house and workshop, and two years afterwards on the twenty-seventh of October he bought the farm of Fitto. In the following year 1520 he added some land to the farm at Settignano. It has been seen that he gave the rentals to his father, for whose comfort he was so desirous of providing.

In 1545 he wished to add to his landed property the estate of Corboli, when his nephew Lionardo, who was obviously deficient in tact and who inherited none of his Uncle's abilities, and was covetous like the other members of the family, committed the folly of urging on the purchase: and brought upon himself the following rebuke:

«Lionardo. Thou hast been in a great hurry to give me information of the possessions of the Corboli. I thought that thou wast still in Florence. Hadst thou fear that I should repent, that thou camest here so eagerly? I tell thee that I mean to act cautiously, for I have made my money with a labour of which one who like thou, wast born with clothes on, knows nothing.

With regard to thy coming to Rome with such expedition, I am not aware that thou camest so quickly when I was in poverty, in want even of bread; it is enough for thee to throw away the money which thou hast not gained, in thy fear of losing this heritage. Whence the necessity for thy coming here, was it for

the love thou bearest me? the love of the moth! if thou didst love me, thou wouldst have written to me thus: «Michelangelo, expend the three thousand crowns there for yourself, for you have given us so much that it is enough, your life is dearer to us than your property.» Thou hast lived upon me now for forty years, nor have I ever had any thing of thine, not even kind words. True it is that last year being urged to do so, for very shame, thou didst send me a load of sweet wine. It matters not if thou hadst not sent it. I do not write this letter to thee because I will not buy, I mean to buy to provide me with an income, for I can work no longer; but I will act cautiously that I may not also buy some burden.»

Lionardo bore the reproaches of his fiery uncle meekly, there is no trace of any hasty or disrespectful reply on his part. Michelangelo's allusion to providing an income has reference to a subject already mentioned, his loss of that derived from the ferry near Piacenza. His letters frequently return to the subject of purchases of land in various parts of Tuscany, at Settignano, from Pier Tedaldi, a farm at Sta Caterina, another at Chianti which he bought. He also corresponds about the purchase of farms, in the plain below Florence on the road to Prato, at Monte Spertoli and the Cepperello, near the paternal farm at Settignano. The transactions regarding these properties and their management must have occupied a good deal of his time and attention, but he rarely refers to these subjects. The purchase of a town mansion also was considered in many letters and Lionardo was directed to make careful enquiries.

But above all, the choice of a wife for his nephew occupied his thoughts for years, this engrossing subject and the continuation of the ancient line of the Buonarroti Simoni, are touched upon with an earnestness and a business like gravity, which for

the first time excite a smile in a history so full of sadness. Writing from Rome in a letter without date, but which is classed with those belonging to 1547 he says:

« Lionardo. I wrote to thee about taking a wife and told thee of three girls which have here been mentioned to me, one is the daughter of Alamanno de' Medici, the other of Domenico Giugni and the last of Cherubin Fortini. I do not know any of them and cannot say either good or ill of them, nor advise thee about one more than another. If however Michele Guicciardini would exert himself, he might learn what sort of women they are and give information, as well as of some other. Therefore ask him to do so on my part, and remember me to him. With regard to the purchase of a house that seems to me a needful thing before taking a wife; thy present house is not suitable. When thou writest to me try to write so that I can read thy letters if my reply or opinion is wanted.[1]

Mes^ser^ Giovanfrancesco (Fattucci) might give thee good advice, he is old and knows the world, remember me to him. Above all seek the counsel of God, for it is a great step. Remember that the husband should be at least ten years older than the wife and that she should be healthy. »[2]

Whilst Michelangelo was occupied with so many great undertakings in Rome, and his private correspondence shows what was the current of his thoughts when he was able to turn from his labours to family affairs, he was called upon to bear sharp affliction from the loss of friends by the hand of death.

In 1547 as has been already mentioned, the friend whom he loved best and admired most, Victoria Colonna died, and the old

[1] On a former occasion he wrote « Lionardo I threw thy last letter into the fire, not being able to read it. »

[2] British Museum Buonarroti MS. published by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 208.

man, so strong in his affections was bowed to the ground by his affliction. A year afterwards in January 1548 his brother Giovansimone likewise died. It might be thought, with but little lamentation of his relatives, but Michelangelo grieved for him; he wrote, « I have been much afflicted, I had hoped although so old, to see him before either of us died, but God has willed it otherwise, therefore submission. It would comfort me to know how he died, if he confessed and communicated and did what the Church requires, to know that he did so would diminish my grief. »[1]

His nephew Lionardo, evidently a cold hearted selfish man, neglected to reply promptly and Michelangelo bitterly reproached him for his indifference and added: « I would remind thee that he was my brother therefore I grieve. Of his death thou writest to me that if he had not all the offices of the Church, he was sincerely contrite; if so, it is enough for his soul's welfare. With regard to what he has left, as he died without a Will it goes to his brother Gismondo. »[2] On this last subject on the twenty eighth of April 1548 he wrote « I decline the heritage of Giovansimone » who in fact must have died in his debt, but this he did not regard, he had for years supported the members of his family, and as he often said, looked to them for nothing but gratitude and brotherly kindness, neither of which he found.

The discussion of the marriage of Lionardo continued, Michelangelo was evidently deeply interested, but either a wife was not easily found or there were other reasons why the nephew was so long in coming to a decision. On the first of February 1549 Michelangelo again wrote:

« Lionardo. I sent thee in my last a note of marriageable girls, which has been sent to me from Florence, I suppose by some

[1] British Museum Buonarroti MS. published by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 208.
[2] Ibid, p. 218.

agent, and he must be a man of small judgment, for I, having been established in Rome for sixteen or seventeen years, he might suppose that I have little knowledge of Florentine families. What I have to say to thee is, if thou wishest to take a wife do not trust to my advice, for I am unable to offer thee the best counsel; but I would say to thee do not run after money but good character.

I believe that in Florence there are many noble but poor families with whom it would be a charity to form a union, and it would be well that there should be no dowry for there would then be no pride. Thou needest a wife to associate with, and whom thou canst rule, and who will not care about pomps and run about every day to parties and marriages. It is easy for a woman to go wrong who does these things. Nor is it to be said by any one, that thou wishest to ennoble thyself by marriage, for it is well known that we are as ancient and noble citizens of Florence as those of any other house. Recommend thyself to God that he may aid thee. »

During this long correspondence frequent reference is made to the purchase of a house, and several were suggested in different parts of the town, but apparently he was not easily satisfied. He thus expressed himself to Lionardo on this subject:

« With regard to the purchase of a house I ratify the same, that is to try to purchase a handsome house to cost from one thousand five hundred to two thousand crowns and in our quarter if possible.[1] So soon as thou hast found a suitable house, I shall forward the money to pay for it. I say this, for I think that a handsome house in town does more honour to a family because so observable, than country possessions: We are citizens

[1] That is in the Ghibelline quarter. It actually is in the Via Ghibellina.

descended from a very noble race. I have all my life done my best to resuscitate my family; but I have not had brothers to help me. However exert thyself to do that which I tell thee, and let Gismondo return to live in Florence, that I may not be made ashamed, by that which they say to me here, that I have a brother who drives oxen. When thou hast bought the house we shall buy other things.»

The house which was finally purchased was that in the Ghibelline quarter of the city, which is now the property of the people of Florence.

It is a modest and dull house, the rooms being neither numerous, spacious nor well laid out. Its decorations are in very indifferent taste, and the interesting works which it contains are not well seen, owing to deficiency of light. The pictures by Florentine artists, representing acts of Michelangelo or events in his life, although some of them are well painted, are utterly without interest from their obviously ideal and even fantastic character. The remarkable relief done by Michelangelo when he was a boy and showing such wonderful promise is so placed that its merits cannot be properly appreciated, it is as badly arranged as if it were the work of a jobbing marble cutter. The house has been lately repaired externally, the arms of Lionardo Buonarroti placed upon an angle of it, and a bronze bust of Michelangelo over the door of entrance.

The marriage of Lionardo was at last happily negotiated. On the twenty-second of April 1553 Michelangelo wrote: «Lionardo I learn from thine, that the arrangement with reference to the daughter of Donato Ridolfi has been completed. God be praised, may it be followed by His grace.» Then on the thirtieth he informs Lionardo of the settlement which he made on the lady of one thousand five hundred ducats. On the twentieth

of May amongst other things after congratulating his nephew on having his wife with him in his house he adds: «I shall show that she is wife of my nephew, although I have not yet done so, but Urbino is returned, and I shall make a demonstration. It has been said to me that a beautiful set of pearls would be well.» Then on the twenty-first of June: «I have provided two rings for Cassandra one a diamond and the other a ruby.» These he forwarded in July.

His happiness was at last increased by what he so greatly wished for, to live to see a descendant of the race of the Buonarroti. In March 1554, having been informed some time before by his nephew of the coming birth of an heir and being consulted as to the child's name, he wrote: «With regard to the names of the children which thou mayest have, I think that thou shouldst perpetuate the name of thy father, if it be a boy, and if a girl, of our Mother, that is Buonarroto or Francesca.» This is a rare but tender allusion to the Mother of Michelangelo. «It would be dear to me to preserve this name of Buonarroto in our house, as it has lasted for three hundred years.»

In the fulness of his heart when a son and heir was born he thus wrote to Vasari:

«Messer Giorgio my dear friend. Your letter has given me great pleasure, seeing that you still remember the poor old man, and still more that you were present at the triumph which you describe to me, that you have seen in life another Buonarroto, for which news I thank you as much as I can do so. So much pomp however displeases me, for men should not be merry, when all the world weeps, besides Lionardo does not show much judgment in holding such festival over a new born, such joy should rather be kept for the death of one who has lived well.»[1]

[1] Letters of Michelangelo published by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 533.

This was an old man's view of life looking forward to coming death, but every thing shows that however needful he might think it to be, to repeat the lessons of his wisdom, he rejoiced with his whole heart in the birth of this child and in the happiness of the parents.

Lionardo on his part was naturally anxious to perpetuate the name of Michelangelo, and his Uncle wrote to him on the ninth of February 1555: «With regard to the babe which thou expectest, thou sayest that thou wouldst wish to give it the name of Michelangelo. If it pleases thee, it also pleases me, but if it is a girl I do not know what to suggest. Please thyself and especially Cassandra to whom remember me. With regard to the charity, which I wrote to thee about, do not make a fuss.» Then in March of the same year. «I learn from thy last the death of Michelangelo, and as much as I rejoiced, now I am sorrowful, even far more. But we must submit and think that it is better so than if he had died in old age.» Children followed rapidly but did not live. In December 1556 he writes: «Thou tellest me that Cassandra has had a child which died in a few days, which has vexed me very much, but I dont wonder for it is our fate not to multiply in Florence. Pray God that the one which thou hast may live, and try to live also, so that every thing may not go to the Hospital.» This is an allusion to the nature of his will. Michelangelo seems to forget that his father had a numerous family of sons.

So late as June 1562, he writes again to Lionardo on the absorbing subject:

«If Cassandra has a son, give him the name of Buonarroto, if a daughter, of Francesca.» Again his Mother. He must have forgotten that there was a child Buonarroto born on the fourteenth of April 1554, who transmitted the family honours.

Michelangelo finished the frescos of the Pauline Chapel in 1549. The anxiety and agitation which he manifested when pressed to commence them in 1542, has been already described; the questions relating to the Julian monument were not settled, and so long as that was the case, Michelangelo could not paint; besides in October of that year he mentions the fact, that the preparatory coat of plaster was not yet dry. Winter therefore was before him when fresco painting must be frequently interrupted. In his letters there are few and brief allusions to his occupation in the Pauline. In January 1546 he recovered from the severe illness which led to the report of his death in Florence, and writing to Messer Luigi Del Riccio, he says: «I am cured and I hope to live some years yet.» No sooner is he well enough, than he returns to the frescos of the Pauline Chapel, for on the third of February of the same year he wrote to Messer Silvestro da Montauto, Rome: «As you are aware, I am occupied in the service of our Lord the Pope painting the Pauline Chapel.» Then in the same year but in an undated letter he writes to Messer Luigi Del Riccio: «You know that fire has unroofed a part of the Chapel, I think it ought to be covered over as before, as quickly as possible, at least roughly if not otherwise, till we have finer weather, so as to defend it from the rains which not only spoil the pictures, but injure the walls.» When this accident occurred some progress must have been made with both pictures. He does not again allude to them, but Vasari and Condivi state that he finished them in his seventy-fifth year, therefore in 1549. It has been seen how various and important were the avocations of Michelangelo during these busy years, and as there can be little doubt that he could have painted the two frescos within two years or less, had he been able to give undivided attention to them, he can only have worked at intervals for they were not finished till seven years had elapsed

after their commencement. The nature of fresco painting being considered, this fact of his intermittent work becomes interesting, for it is evident that in conducting it, he must have been subjected to much labour and inconvenience and to some loss. The prepared lime would be sometimes made useless and on his return to his painting after an interval, the fresco would be dry and hard, whilst to recommence, he would be under the necessity of again wetting the wall close to this dry and hard painting, the damp spreading into the portion of the picture completed, and staining it. Again he would have to prepare on each occasion a new stock of ground colours and to match them with those on the wall, no easy task. The conditions of fresco painting were the same then as now, and it is always desirable for many reasons, when a work is commenced, to prosecute it till it is finished. Technically considered, the frescos in the Pauline Chapel, notwithstanding these unfavourable circumstances, are executed with extraordinary care, the surface is very smooth and even, the joints are for the most part imperceptible, showing very fine manipulation.

As works of Michelangelo in his old age they can only be spoken of with respect, yet at the same time with a feeling of sadness for it is evident that his powers were decaying, but apparently not his confidence in those powers. The absence of any study of nature is still more evident, than in the fresco of the last Judgment, he no longer made use of the living model, but drew and painted from memory; manner has completely usurped the place of style, and in these pictures the greatest draughtsman who ever lived has shown the danger of such a system. Notwithstanding his marvellous gifts and cultivated power, he is unable to arrest the sympathies or awaken interest in works so entirely artificial and devoid of nature. It is painful to find so great an example, as Michelangelo once was, of the

careful study and observation of nature, finally abandoning that path which in his vigorous youth he evidently considered the only true one.

The dominant ideas resemble those which prevailed in designing and painting the last Judgment, all the figures have the same characteristics, but more feebly rendered. Muscular and rather common place looking naked men fly in the air or lounge on clouds, and these represent the angels of heaven. Christ, strongly foreshortened, darts down towards the prostrate Paul, whilst the muscular angels look on with utter indifference. This figure of the Saviour is without dignity, it is only a remarkable achievement in the art of fore-shortening. In a bare barren landscape beneath, with an ill drawn Tuscan village in one corner, are Paul and his companions, and his terrified horse. An attempt is made to embody the excitement of the scene, there is evidence of the former vehemence and impetuosity of the noble artist, but one characteristic is gone, his power of representing living motion. Christ and angels fly, mortals beneath are in the attitudes of extreme agitation or run from the terrible scene, but all are petrified, in the attitudes of motion, but motionless.

There is over both the pictures the shadow of the greatness of Michelangelo, but looking on them, the prevailing feeling must be that of regret, for it is evident that the decay of his noble faculties had commenced.

He sadly remarked to Vasari that these works had cost him «much fatigue, for it happens that painting, and especially fresco painting, is not an art for old men.» In March of the year in which he finished his work in the Pauline, he thus wrote of his health to his nephew: «I have been very ill, groaning all night with pain, unable to sleep, without rest, the Doctors tell me that my disease is stone.... I have need of help from God, tell Francesca to pray for me, if she saw how I am, she would

know that she has a companion in misery. Otherwise I am like a man who is not quite yet thirty years of age.» [1]

On the twenty-third of the same month he again wrote to Lionardo, that by drinking a certain water, he had been in a great measure relieved of his cruel malady. It was whilst thus tortured and, as he elsewhere says, hardly able to move, that the brave old man mounted his scaffolds in the Pauline, and painted in fresco, that art which he truly said «was not for the aged.»

Within the year in which he finished the pictures of the Pauline Chapel, Michelangelo wrote his often quoted letter to Messer Benedetto Varchi, containing his estimate of the comparative claims to superiority of sculpture and painting, in which the subject is very slightly discussed, whilst all may agree with him as to the inutility of the discussion.

It is of interest as showing his opinions, especially during the earlier part of his career, when he produced paintings resembling sculpture in their composition and aim. His letter shows that he meant them to be so. Its date is Rome.... 1549.

« Messer Benedetto. That you may be aware that I have received your book. I shall reply to your question although imperfectly. It appears to me that painting is most esteemed the nearer it approaches to the relief of sculpture, and that sculpture is defective the more it resembles the flatness of painting. It used to be my opinion that sculpture was the lamp of painting and that the difference between them was like that which exists between the sun and the moon. But now that I have read in your little book that, philosophically considered, those things which have a similar end, are one and the same, I have changed my opinion, and I say that if greater judgment and difficulty, impediment and labour, do not confer higher noble-

[1] Michelangelo's Letters. British Museum. Gaetano Milanesi, p. 242.

ness, then painting and sculpture may be considered equal, and this being admitted, it follows that no painter should undervalue sculpture nor should any sculptor depreciate painting. Sculpture, I understand to be that art which results from taking away that which is superfluous whilst painting is produced by adding substance, enough said, both come from the same intellect, and peace may be made between them, and disputes avoided, for more time is thus lost than would suffice to make statues. He who wrote that painting was a more noble art than sculpture, if he shows equal capacity in all else that he has written, my servant would have done as well. An infinite number of things not yet discussed might be said of these arts, but as I have observed too much time would be required and I have little to spare. I am old, almost numbered with the dead, therefore I pray you have me excused. I recommend myself to you and thank you as much as in me lies for the honour which you have done me which is more than I deserve.» [1]

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO
in Rome.

In his anxiety for the preservation of the frescos of the Sixtine and Pauline Chapels, Paul III constituted a new office, that of guardian and cleaner of the frescos. After describing its emoluments and privileges, the papal letter goes on to say, that the office bearer is required « to clean well and to keep clean the pictures of the vault from dust and other defilements and to preserve them from the smoke of the lights which ascends in both Chapels during the performance of the divine offices.» This

[1] Buonarroti Archives. A copy of the period and Michelangelo the younger wrote on the back of the letter. « Given to me by Cav. Pierantonio di Giulio De Nobili. This letter besides being published by Varchi in 1549 and afterwards in Venice 1564 by Aldo may be found in the:» Gaetano Milanesi, « Lettere Pittoriche.» V. I, p. 9.

charge was conferred on Urbino probably on the recommendation of Michelangelo, and it might at first sight appear that it was a function which it was desirable to continue. Possibly it might have been so, had it been possible to secure a succession of judicious cleaners, faithful to the memory of Michelangelo, but as this was impossible, and seeing what ideas of cleaning have prevailed in disastrous times, and what have been the qualifications of official picture cleaners, it is matter for thankfulness that they were not continued; otherwise there would be now no fragment of the original work of the great painter. Better the dust smoke and cobwebs of centuries of neglect, than the tender mercies of four centuries of official scourers.

The frescos in the Pauline Chapel have been lately cleaned, and the dust and effects of smoke removed so that they are comparatively bright, if they have not been retouched, the experiment is a deeply interesting one, and a report from the artist of his proceedings would be invaluable.[1]

What is wanted in every such case is to remove «defilements» to do all that can be done to arrest decay, and to stop there.

A very noble bust of Paul III which exists at Naples is attributed to Michelangelo. It represents the Pope at an advanced age, clad in a magnificently embroidered albe, in the rich border of which, exquisitely finished bas-reliefs of scriptural subjects are introduced designed in the manner of Michelangelo. If compared with his other works of the period when this bust was executed, it may be seen that it cannot be his work. It is more probably by the very able sculptor Fra Guglielmo Della Porta who executed the monument of the Pope in St Peters.

[1] When I was in Rome access to the Pauline Chapel was less easy than in former days. So much having been generously granted to me in the Sixtine I did not press for any unusual privilege in the Pauline nor ask for ladders. I therefore could not closely examine the frescos. I did so in 1842 and then learnt to appreciate the careful execution.

The Pauline Chapel being finished Michelangelo soon afterwards lost his devoted friend and protector Paul III, who died on the tenth of November, literally of a broken heart caused by the ingratitude and misconduct of relatives on whom he had conferred many benefits.

On the twenty-first of December Michelangelo thus wrote to his nephew:

« Lionardo. In reply to your last it is true that I have felt great sorrow, and not less a sense of loss in the death of the Pope, for I have been advantaged by His Holiness and hoped to be still more so. Thus it has pleased God and we must submit. His death was becoming and he retained his faculties to the last. May God have mercy on his soul. »

It might be wished that this letter had contained less reference to his personal interests, but on the other hand it was written to a near relative, to whom it was of special importance to know what effect the loss of such a friend would have upon his uncle's position and prospects.

Paul III was succeeded by Cardinal Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte San Savino who became Pope with the name of Julius III on the seventh of February 1550. Whatever his qualities otherwise, he entertained a warm regard for Michelangelo and admired his genius. Before the close of the first year of his Pontificate he sought his advice and assistance being desirous of erecting two monuments, one to memory of his uncle Cardinal Antonio Del Monte and the other to his grandfather Fabiano; Michelangelo thus refers to the subject on the first of August 1550 in a letter to Vasari: « The Pope being gone to San Pietro in Montorio sent for me. I was not in time, but I met him on the bridge and we had a long conversation, when he told me that

he had resolved not to put these monuments on the Mount, but in the church of the Florentines, and he requested me to prepare designs. I encouraged this idea, thinking that by this means that church might be completed. » The designs were made by Giorgio Vasari who acknowledges that they owed much to the oversight of Michelangelo, and Ammannato was appointed sculptor.

Julius was somewhat of a bon-vivant and of a careless temper, it may be owing to this that he neglected for some time to confirm Michelangelo in his office, thus exposing him to renewed machinations on the part of those whose interest it was to remove him from the oversight of the fabric of St Peters.

The position in which Michelangelo, and it is to be presumed many others were placed between the death of one Pope and the election of another, was one of anxiety and uncertainty. It seems strange that so long a period should have to pass after the election of Julius, who was so much his friend, before he was confirmed in his office as architect of St Peters. From his letters it would appear that he was obliged to push his claims to consideration. Writing to Lionardo in August 1550 he says:

[1]« Since receiving the Trebbian wine and the shirts, I have not had occasion to write to you till now, when it would be advantageous to me to have two Briefs of Pope Paul, one of which contains the terms of the provision which His Holiness made for me for life, when in Rome in his service, the which Briefs I sent to Florence with other writings in the box which you received a year ago and which must be in certain tin cases which you know. Put them into a packet with wax-cloth-cover and into a small well corded case, and send them to me by a faithful person.... I wish to show the Pope that he may understand,

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

that by these briefs, I am creditor for I believe, two thousand crowns due by His Holiness, not that this may benefit me, but for my satisfaction.»

Whether Michelangelo was ever paid does not appear in the correspondence. He well knew by experience how much depended on the friendship of the Pope, for notwithstanding his works, his greatness and his noble self sacrifice, he was the mark at whom many enemies aimed their arrows ceaselessly. It is possible that some such thought filled his mind when, in one of the finest of his drawings, he represented a throng of archers shooting their arrows at a stainless scutcheon whilst love sits weeping on the ground.

Although it is to retrograde, the following example of the wild slander to which he was so frequently exposed may be related. Very soon after his appointment as architect of St Peters, he was bitterly attacked by a certain Iacopo Del Conte, a Florentine artist, whose name is thus held up to merited infamy by Giovanfrancesco Ughi a friend, who thus wrote to Michelangelo upon the fourteenth of May 1547:

«For some time I have not written to you, nothing having happened, nor should I have written to you now, were it not, that Iacopo Del Conte has come here with the wife of Nanni di Baccio Bigio and he says that he has brought her here, Nanni having so much to do on account of St Peters, and amongst other statements he says that he is to make a model to overthrow your design, seeing that you are doing mad and childish things which by every means he will cast to the ground; that he is in as much favour with the Pope as you are, that you throw away an infinite amount of money, and that you work at night so as not to be observed, whilst you follow in the footsteps of

a certain Spaniard who is as ignorant as you are of architecture. Nanni, he says, remains in Rome in spite of you although you did everything to drive him away, but knowing that the Pope can do no good thing without him he is resolved to stay. So much the more will he have reason to stay when he shows his model. Not only does he say all this, but many other things against your honour and good fame, amongst which, that you have made a model for the cornice of the Farnese so enormous, that although it is of wood only, they have been obliged to shore the walls, and he hopes that you will ruin that palace so that ruin may fall on yourself. Thus he utters a thousand follies about you, which vex your friends, for your honour is somewhat touched. Although he is not generally believed, still he goes about slandering to such an extent, that it is said, he has found some to believe him.

I have resolved to advise you of this, that insolence may meet its chastisement. You have preserved your honour, and although I know that one should not write of such things, I am compelled to do so, by the insolence and brazen dishonesty of speech with which he calumniates you, apparently he knows no other. For this reason, I write to you. God protect you.» [1]

Michelangelo lost no time, but sent this letter to Messer Bartolommeo Ferratino one of the Deputies of the fabric of St Peters writing upon it:

« Messer Bartolommeo, for any sake read this letter and consider who these two greedy persons are, who thus have lied as to what I have done at the Farnese Palace, and thus lie regarding the information which they give to the Deputies of the fabric of St Peters. This comes of the favours which I have done them, and nothing else was to be expected of two vile rascally peasants.» [2]

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

[2] Written on the outside.

Vasari relates how the Sangallo sect, as he terms the enemies of Michelangelo, who had turned them out of office and employment; by their repeated attacks on his work induced the Deputies of the fabric to make an appeal to the Pope for inquiry. His Holiness summoned them together with the Cardinals Salviati and Cervini to meet Michelangelo, to whom the Pope said: « The Deputies maintain that the alcove of the king which you have made in St Peters where there are three chapels with three windows above, will have too little light. »

Michelangelo according to Vasari answered: « I should like to hear what the Deputies have to say » whereon Cardinal Marcello replied, « We are they. » Michelangelo said: « Monsignore, above these windows in the vault which is to be built of travertine there are to be three others. » « You never told us so » answered the Cardinal, whereon the resolute artist. « I am not, nor will I ever consent to be obliged to explain, either to your Eminence or to any one, what I mean or will to do. Your office is to find money and to guard it from robbers, and the design of the building is my charge. » Then turning to the Pope he said: « Holy Father you see what I gain, if the labour which I undergo does not benefit my soul, I lose time and work. »

The Pope who loved him laying his hand upon his shoulder said. « You benefit both soul and body, have no fear. »

This graphic anecdote of Vasari, not only shows what Michelangelo was exposed to at the commencement of the new Pontificate, but the resolution of the Pope to protect him, and he must have done so effectually, although he did not renew the Brief of his predecessor or confirm Michelangelo in his position till the twenty-third of January 1552, when he renewed all his powers in the most ample manner, placing him in full and absolute authority and at the close of the document forbidding any one to change or alter any portion of his design.

It is pleasant to observe in the correspondence of Michelangelo in his old age evidence of happiness and of a calmer spirit and gentler mood; although much harassed whilst directing the works of St Peters, he appears to have been less provoked by opposition, conspiracy and slander, than in former years. Corporeally he suffered intensly from his malady but he expresses himself on this subject with resignation. Evidence of his strong religious faith and feeling is present in many of his letters together with the warmest sentiments of affection for his relatives. He thus expresses himself to Lionardo in April 1549: « With regard to my disease I am better and now there is hope to the astonishment of all, for I was thought to be dying and so I also believed. I have had a good physician, but I believe more in the efficacy of prayer. » His earnestness in his religious belief is shown by many expressions as well as his quickness in detecting hypocrisy. « To day I have had a letter from that wife of the weaver, who says that she wished to provide a wife for thee, a daughter of Capponi and his wife Niccolini.... she has written me a long bible with a small sermon advising me to live righteously and to give alms, and she says that she has persuaded thee to live like a christian and that she was inspired by God to give thee that damsel. I should say that she would be better occupied spinning and weaving than disposing of so much sanctimoniousness. »

Michelangelo frequently alludes to the making of his Will in his correspondence with his nephew and even consults him as to the disposal of his property. Whilst his remaining brother Sigismund lived he proposed to divide it equally between him and his nephew Lionardo, and failing heirs of the family name, all was to be imherited by « San Martino, » that is the income was to be given for the love of God to the modest poor. »

His charities were frequent and generous, and in a number of his letters he expresses his sympathy with poverty stricken respectability.

In the correspondence thus briefly alluded to, most of which is preserved in the Buonarroti Archives, he consults his nephew with frankness and cordiality, frequently indulging in affectionate expressions, after the marriage which gratified him so much.

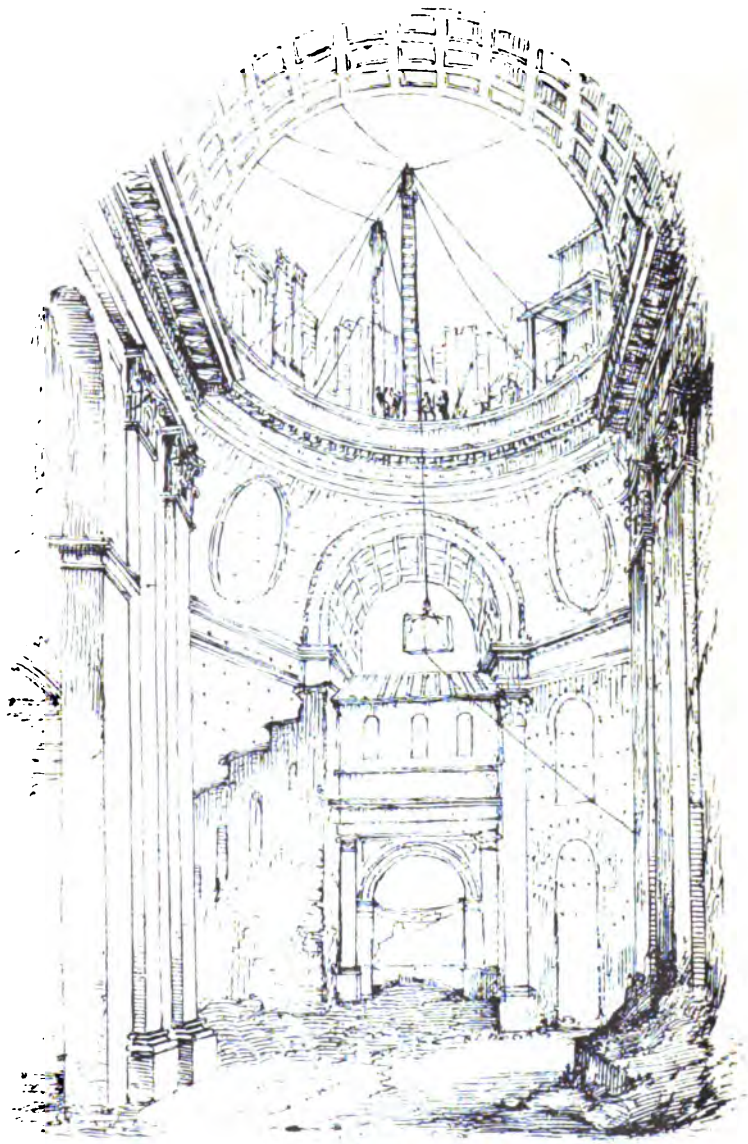
Amongst the letters addressed to his nephew at this time the following has a peculiar interest. On the seventh of March 1551 he thus refers to his lost friend Victoria Colonna:

« Messer Giovanfrancesco (Fattucci) asked me about a month ago for something of the Marchesa di Pescara if I had it. I have a small book in parchment which she gave me ten years ago in which there are one hundred and three sonnets, not counting those which she sent me afterwards from Viterbo which are forty in number, which I had bound in the same volume and I lent them to many persons, so that they were printed. I have besides many letters which she wrote me from Orvieto and Viterbo. These are what I have of the Marchesa. Show this to the Priest and tell me what he says. » [1]

During the Pontificate of Julius III Michelangelo passed his life in comparative freedom from attacks and opposition. His letters to Lionardo and his friends make no allusions to enemies or personal trials on their account, but he not unfrequently alludes to the spirit in which he conducted the building of St Peters « for the love of God and the benefit of his soul. » The dome of St Peters whilst it was so noble a creation of his genius and self sacrifice, was also in every sense a religious work in his estimation.

His correspondence also indicates a cheerful spirit and interest in others. In 1552 he thus writes to Benvenuto Cellini:

[1] British Museum. Buonarroti MS. Published by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 270.



ST. PETERS IN PROGRESS
TIME OF MICHELANGELO

PLATE 19.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

« My Benvenuto. For many years I have known you for the greatest goldsmith who ever lived, now I shall know you as an equally great sculptor. Know that Messer Bindo Altoviti took me to see his bust in bronze and told me that it was done by you. I was greatly pleased with it, but it was put in a very bad light: if it was well lighted, it would be seen what a beautiful work it is. »

Various letters follow which are of great interest as they explain his motives for not leaving Rome and returning to Florence, when pressed to do so by his friends. He was desirous of carrying the edifice so far, that there would not be much risk of his successor altering the design.

In 1554, attempts were made also on the part of Duke Cosmo to induce Michelangelo to leave Rome and St Peters and to return to Florence. Vasari was employed to open this negotiation and received the following reply to his first letter:

Rome, 19th September 1554.

« Messer Giorgio dear friend. You will say that I am crazy and too old to make sonnets; but because so many say that I have become childish I will show my gift. From yours I see the love that you bear me, and be assured that it would be dear to me if my feeble bones could lie beside those of my father as you pray me, but did I depart now I should be the cause of ruin to the fabric of St Peters, of a great shame and sin. But once the design is carried so far that it cannot be changed, I hope to do what you write, whilst it is no sin to keep up the discomfort of several greedy people who long for my departure. »

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI
in Rome.[1]

[1] Letters of Michelangelo published by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 534.

In March 1555 Michelangelo lost his friend Pope Julius III. In the following April the admirable Marcellus was elected supreme Pontiff. It is impossible to say what might have been his disposition towards Michelangelo, he was too good a man to act unjustly, but Vasari's anecdote of the conduct of the Deputies shortly after the election of Julius shows that Marcellus was prejudiced. He reigned only twenty-two well spent and useful days and was succeeded on the twenty-third May by Cardinal Gian Pietro Caraffa who took the title of Paul IV.

The efforts of Duke Cosmo to induce Michelangelo to leave Rome were renewed through Giorgio Vasari, who received a reply written in the same spirit and nearly in the same words on the eleventh of May 1555:

« I was placed by force over the fabric of St Peters, and I have served for eight years, not only as a free gift, but to my great loss and discomfort; now that progress has been made and now that there is money and that I am about to turn the cupola, if I departed, it would be the ruin of the fabric, it would be a reproach to me throughout Christendom, and a grievous sin on my part. Therefore my dear Messer Giorgio, I pray you, to thank the Duke for his noble offers which you have written to me about, and to beseech his Highness that with his grace and permission, I desire to remain here till I can leave with reputation, honour and without sin. »

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI.[1]

Then again he writes on the twenty-second of June of the same year:

[1] Buonarroti Archives published by Gaetano Milanesi, p. 537.

« Messer Giorgio my dear friend. One of these evenings there came to my house a discreet and well-bred young gentleman Messer Lionardo, chamberlain of the Duke; with many kindly demonstrations he made me the same offers on the part of his Highness which you did in your last. I answered him as I did you, that I besought the permission of his Highness to go on with the work of St Peters till it was completed, so that it might not be altered and another form given to it, for did I depart before this it would be the cause of great misfortune, a shame and a crime. Thus I pray that for the love of God and of St Peters you will beseech the Duke for me. You must see in my hand writing that I touch the twenty-fourth hour, and no thought is now born in my mind in which death is not mixed. God grant that a few years of labour may yet be mine. »

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI
Rome.

In other letters Michelangelo uses the same arguments, in some explaining in plain terms why his absence would lead to such ruin of the enterprise, « it would satisfy a number of robbers » he had set his foot on the system prevalent before he became architect, of peculation and dishonest gain, and he had been ceaselessly harassed by these robbers, ever since he dismissed them from employment.

Towards the close of 1555, his last remaining brother Sigismund died and Michelangelo wrote to his nephew on the thirtieth of November:

« Lionardo. I learn by your letter that Gismondo my brother is dead and not without much suffering. We must be submissive, and that he should have died respected by all, and having partaken of the sacraments of the Church, let us thank God.

I am here in great grief; Urbino is very ill in bed and I know not what will happen, I am as grieved as if he was my son, he has faithfully served me for five and twenty years, and now that I am old I have no time to train another like him, therefore great is my sorrow, if there be any devout person near thee, I beseech him to pray for his health.» [1] Urbino died on the third of December and Michelangelo wrote on the fourth to Lionardo expressing his grief and estimation of his old servant and friend, his sorrow was not of brief duration, for on the twenty-third of February 1556, he wrote to Vasari regarding his loss:

« Messer Giorgio, dear friend. I write with difficulty, but to reply to yours I shall say something. You know that Urbino is dead; whence much grace of God has been given to me, with infinite grief for my heavy loss. The grace has been, that whilst he lived he kept me alive, dying he has taught me how to die without fear, but to welcome death. He has been with me twenty-six years and I found him loyal and faithful, and now, that I have made him rich and that I expected him to be the staff and rest of my old age, he has vanished from me and no hope is left me, but to see him in Paradise. Of this God has given me a sign in his happy death, and that it grieved him to leave me to live in this treacherous world, with its many sorrows, far more than to die. The best part of me is gone with him, nothing remains to me, but infinite misery. I beseech you to make my excuses to Messer Benvenuto (Cellini) that I do not answer his letter, for such sad thoughts abound in me, that I cannot write, remember me to him and to you I commend myself.» [2]

Yours

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI

Rome.

[1] Letters of Michelangelo. Gaetano Milanesi, p. 539.

[2] Buonarroti Archives. Gaetano Milanesi, p. 313.

So sadly closed 1555 on Michelangelo, and he besought his nephew to come and see him in his grief: «It would be dear to me to see you, but I know not how your love of your wife may permit you to leave Florence» and again «I am old and I wish to see you before I die.»

It does not appear from the correspondence that Lionardo, whatever the reason may have been, visited him as he desired.

Chapter XXI

Pope Paul IV confirmed Michelangelo in his employments and offices, thereby strengthening his resolution not to leave Rome or to abandon his work on St Peters, to which he believed that he had been divinely called. « I have always held it to be a condition not to leave Rome, till I have carried on the building of St Peters so far, that it cannot be altered from my design nor spoilt, and also not to give an opportunity to robbers to return and to plunder, as they did before and hope to do again. These have been my objects and are so still, to carry out which many believe, as I do, that I have been chosen by God. » [1]

The Pope soon after his election, involved himself in a quarrel with Spain, being bent on destroying Spanish influence in Italy. The Roman States were consequently invaded by a Spanish army from Naples, led by the Duke of Alba, which soon occupied the most important towns and presented itself in the Roman Campagna, the light cavalry riding up to the city gates. The

[1] Letter of Michelangelo. Gaetano Milanesi, p. 336.

Pope had assembled a gallant looking force to oppose the Spaniards, which he reviewed in person, bestowing his benediction, with no beneficial effect however, for the papal army was not composed of fighting men, and he was soon compelled to come to a truce with Alba, the most courteous and religious of foes, who conquered cities in the Pope's name, and respectfully defeated the troops, whom His Holiness had consecrated to a very different object.

It was during the course of these events, when the citizens of Rome were dreading a revival of the horrors of the last occupation, that Michelangelo is represented as sharing in the general terror and «secretly» fleeing from Rome. The following is his own account of his temporary absence for forty days:

Rome, 31st October 1556.

« Lionardo, dearest nephew,

Some days since I received thine, to which I did not make any immediate reply, not having had time; now I shall make up for my silence that thou mayest not wonder but understand the cause of it. Rather more than a month ago, finding that the works of St Peters were going on slowly, I resolved to go as far as Loreto for my devotion, when in Spoleto, feeling weary, I remained there to rest; I could go no further for a messenger was sent after me to tell me that I must return to Rome. Not to disobey I did so, and thank God am here now, to remain as it may please God seeing the disturbance which there is. I will not dilate further except to say that there are hopes of peace which God grant may be fulfilled. Preserve thine health, pray God to give his aid. »

Thine as a Father

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI

Rome.

To Lionardo, my dearest nephew, Florence.

Then on the twenty-eighth December he thus expressed himself to Vasari. « I have lately had, at some cost of money and fatigue, a great pleasure in the mountains of Spoleto, in visiting those hermits, so that but a part of me has returned to Rome, for in truth peaceful existence dwells in these woods. »

Michelangelo was the very soul of uprightness and truth, there is not one word in these honest letters which suggest that he left Rome from any such base motive or in such a manner as Vasari describes. He proposed to go to Loreto for devout reasons, nothing more natural with his opinions; he made no secret of his departure, for he was found at once when wanted and he instantly returned, the enemy occupying the Campagna up to the gates of Rome. He expressed his wishes for peace, as the bravest might do, especially if he had witnessed, as Michelangelo had done, the miseries of war, and in writing to Vasari from the crowded and anxious city, he alludes with natural longing to the beautiful dwellings of peace in the woods of Spoleto.

Had Michelangelo wished to leave Rome he had every opportunity of doing so, by accepting the pressing and flattering invitation of Duke Cosmo, which from a sense of duty he declined, even when the horizon was dark, and victorious Spanish troops were close to the city walls.

Rome, ... May 1557.

« To the Illustrious Duke Cosmo of Florence,

Sir. About three months ago I explained to your Signory that I could not then leave the building of St Peters, without harm to it and without reproach to myself, and that to leave it in the state in which I wished it to be I should require another year. I understood that your Signory was disposed to grant me so much time. Now I have another letter from your Signory pressing me to return sooner than I expected to do, which

causes me much distress, for I am subjected at present to more labour and trouble than usual with the fabric, the reason being, that in the vault of the chapel of the King of France, which is of an unusual and difficult construction, an error has been made, owing to my inability to visit the building frequently, from my old age and infirmity. I must take down a great part of it. Which chapel it is Bastian da Sangiminiano can describe, as he has been Master of works here, as well as its importance to the whole fabric. This chapel being put right, which may be done this summer, nothing will remain for me to do but to leave a model of the whole as I am besought by every one and especially by Cardinal De Carpi. Then I may return to Florence to take my rest in death, to the thought of which I try day and night to accustom myself, so that it may not find me worse prepared than other old men.

Now to return to my request, I beseech your Signory to concede to me the time needful of one year more on account of the building, as it seemed to me by your last letter you were satisfied to give me. »

The least of your Signory's servants

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI

Rome.

Michelangelo wrote at the same time an earnest letter to Vasari, which shows how far it was from his wish to leave Rome, however perilous the times. These letters also indicate the state and progress of the work on St Peters:

Rome, ... May 1557.

« Messer Giorgio dear friend. I call God to witness that against my will and by overmastering force on the part of Pope Paul, I was made architect of St Peters ten years ago. If the works had been continued as they began I should now, as I

wish, have returned to Florence. But they have been much delayed, and slackened at the time when they reached the most difficult and laborious parts, so that to abandon them now, would be nothing less than shameful, and to lose the fruits of ten years labour, endured for the love of God. I have made these remarks in reply to yours, because I have a letter from the Duke, which has filled me with admiration that he should have deigned to write to me so kindly. I thank God and his Excellency with all my heart. But I wander, for I have lost memory and brains, and writing is a great fatigue to me, for it is not my art. The conclusion is this, that you may understand what the consequences would be did I abandon the fabric now and leave Rome. In the first place I should gratify various robbers, and I should be the cause of its ruin, and perhaps that it should be closed for ever. In the second place I have some debts due to me, and a house and other things altogether amounting to some thousands of crowns, and if I departed without permission, I know not what would become of these. Besides I am in bad health, suffer in my reins and side, have stone, and am like all old men. Master Eraldo will bear testimony that I owe it to him that I am in life. I have not strength to go to Florence to return here, and there is too much to settle here, before I can leave permanently and with no care.... Messer Giorgio I recommend myself to you and beseech you to recommend me to the Duke, and to do all that you can for me. As for me it only remains for me to die, that which I write to you understates the truth. [1]

I answered the Duke's letter because I was told that I must do so, but I had little heart for it. Could I ride now I would have visited Florence and returned. »

MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI.

[1] Michelangelo also suffered from gout. « I have not been able on account of cruel pain in my foot. » Buonarroti Archives, 5th July 1555.

These letters may suffice to show how devoted Michelangelo was to the work, which he had undertaken for the love of God only. The allusions which he makes to his interest, must refer to his emoluments as architect of the Apostolic Palace, which he would have been deprived of, if he had left Rome, where he likewise had property, having been established there for so many years.

Michelangelo had also reasons of the strongest nature, for not leaving Rome at this time. Owing to his inability to visit the works frequently, a serious blunder had been made by the Master mason in charge. Having a vault of a difficult and complicated nature to construct, he had, in the temporary absence of Michelangelo from ill health, prepared all the centerings of one curvature only, whereas those required, were in the great architects language « infinite. » A model of the vault had been prepared, but this evidently did not suffice as a guide. Probably neither working-drawings nor moulds were supplied, as would now be the case for each pair of centerings, thus a serious mistake was made, and the vault which was of travertine stone, was partly carried up before it was seen by Michelangelo, who mentions it with vexation and states, that the application of the travertine vault was new in Rome. He here probably alludes to the method commonly in use of brick arch alternating with concrete. The error was of a costly as well as a clumsy nature, for not only would new centerings have to be made, but the travertine voussoirs would have to be hewn over again. Michelangelo wrote able technical descriptions of what had taken place to his friend Vasari, who published the letters in his biography. They are interesting, for they show clearly, the great progress which he had made in practical knowledge. In his early architectural experience he had depended upon assistants to make working-drawings, and on his foremen of the works to direct the building; now in his old age, such had been his mar-

vellous industry, such the penetrating power of his genius, that since he first studied the technical conditions of architecture at Carrara, he had now become the best guide, in constructing the most difficult portions of the basilica of St Peters, the cupola, and also the vault of an apse with its varied curvatures. He was not only the designer but the soul of the whole work, and that when he was suffering from a painful and hopeless disease.

This wonderful old man thus working and enduring, with a spirit within him which rose superior to his bodily ills and outward trials, returned to the use of his beloved mallet and chisels, and about this time blocked out the Pietà, which has been already alluded to. Probably there is a year's labour on it for it contains four figures life-size, and it was whilst working on this that it was said, that he struck off more scales of marble in a quarter of an hour than three young marble cutters would have done in three or four times that span, whilst the fire sprang from the marble under his blows. Dissatisfied with the group he shattered it with a steel pick-axe; in all probability as has been already suggested, because his taste had survived his power of production. The encountering a little flint in the marble, the reason usually assigned for his conduct, is not enough to account for his passion, all his life he had been accustomed to meet with such accidental defects, which may vex a sculptor, but not induce him to act like a madman. The group itself explains why Michelangelo broke it.

It was after this failure in his beloved art of sculpture, that his cultivated eye and taste and his acquired knowledge of geometry, enabled him to fix the grand proportions and exquisite curves of the cupola of which he soon after made a model. Thus when his powers as Sculptor and Painter had decayed, he became greater far, than ever he had been as an Architect, greater than any of his contemporaries.

Michelangelo's feeble state of health was marked by his friends with much anxiety, and they all agreed in fearing that if he died, his noble design would be altered by succeeding architects, and for this they had too much reason in the past history of St Peters. Popes joined in the same sentiment and in their Briefs denounced all future and contingent departures from the plans of Michelangelo, but after their deaths their Briefs were more useless than the parchment on which they were written. It was therefore proposed that he should make a model of his proposed cupola of such a size and so detailed that there could be no reasonable pretence for further transformation. He mentions this project for the first time on the thirteenth of February 1557: « There is now added to my labour that I must make a large wooden model of the cupola and lantern, so as to leave a complete design of how the whole work is to be finished. I am besought by all Rome to do this and chiefly by the most Reverend Cardinal De Carpi, so that I think that I must remain a year to do it.... As to the building being shut, that is not true, there are at present sixty men at work, hewers, builders and labourers, with every hope of going on. I request that you will read this to the Duke and I beseech his Signory that he grant me time to do what is needful before I return to Florence. For if, as envious men desire, the building is altered, it would then be as if my labour up to this time had been vain. »

Duke Cosmo was in reality very anxious that Michelangelo should return to Florence and without committing himself personally too much he contrived to make his wishes known. Michelangelo evidently felt himself to be placed in a difficult position, he represented his unwillingness to the Duke, pressed it on his attention through his nephew and Vasari and finally requested the intervention of Cardinal De Carpi who wrote:

«As I am aware that Michelangelo Buonarroti is much chagrined, that on account of the fabric of St Peters he is unable to satisfy your Excellency as you desire, and whilst on the other hand I know, that our Lord greatly wishes that this good old man should pass these last years of his life in peace, that he may thus be enabled to complete at least the model of St Peters, in which building there can be no doubt, that otherwise, after his death numerous mistakes will be made, so that could he live to finish it, it would be infinitely for the benefit of the fabric. His Holiness being informed by me and by others of the perplexity into which this good man has fallen, he commissioned me before I left Rome, that I should write on his part to your Excellency, that you might be graciously pleased to allow him to remain in this service, in which I am much interested, owing to the charge which I have of the building, which I am certain your Excellency must have at heart also, considering its pious and religious use. I beseech you so to reply to me, that that accomplished and good old man, may with his mind at peace attend to whatever is necessarily expected from him, in his extreme age for the holy service of God in this celebrated place. With my usual desire to serve your Excellency, to whose good graces I recommend myself, with my whole heart praying for your happiness.»

Your Servant

CARDINAL DE CARPI.

This letter indicates the personal interest which Pope Paul took in the building of St Peters and in its great architect, spite of his absorbing occupations and dangerous political difficulties, whilst the tone in which the Duke of Florence is addressed is very different from that formerly used towards the Republic.

The Republic would not have dared to press Michelangelo to leave the Pope's service, and could not protect him when he did

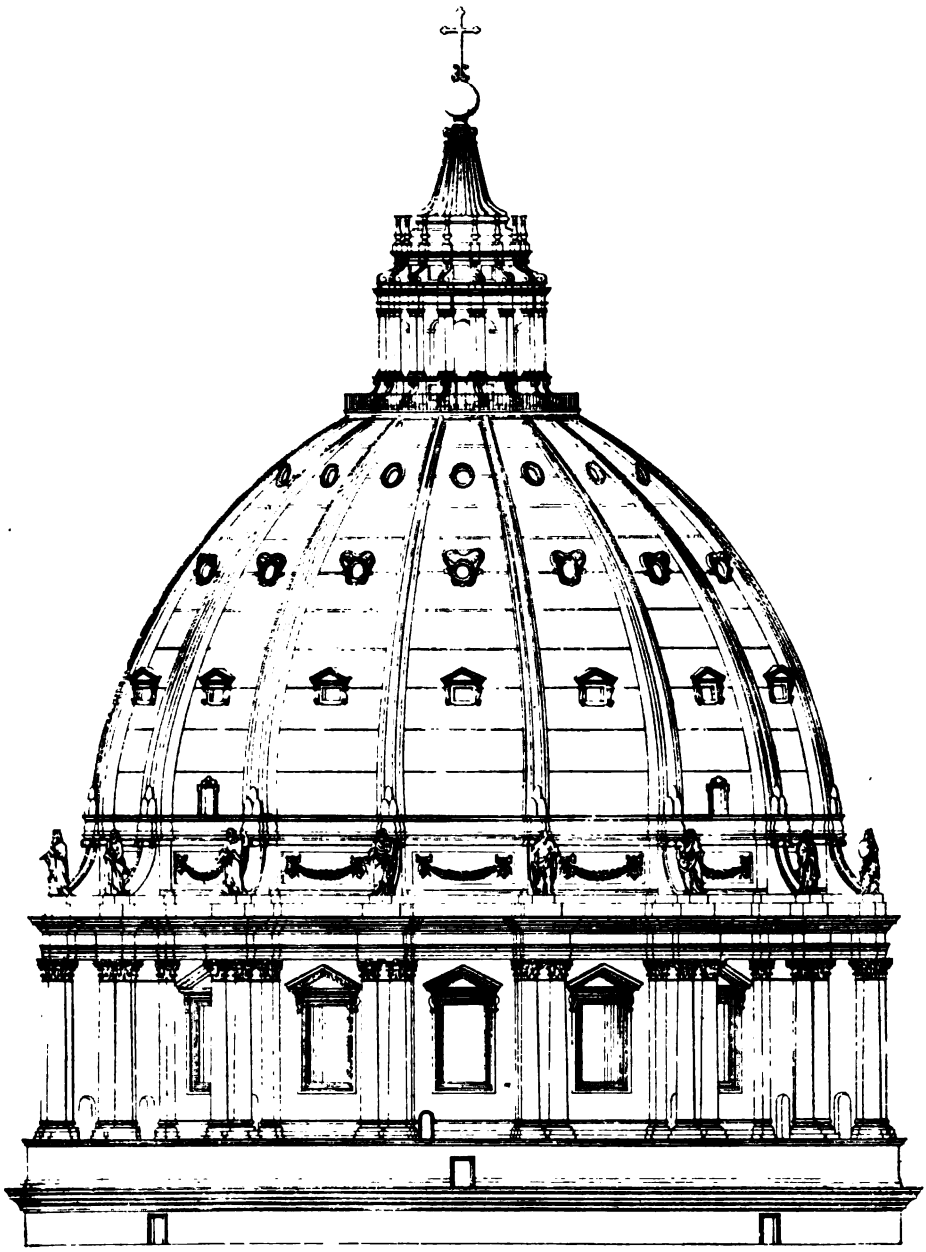
so, whereas Cosmo offered him a friendly reception and the highest honours, should he return to Florence. His reply to the Cardinal shows that he wished it to be understood that he had limited himself to these offers, and he evidently resented the hint that the course which he was pursuing disturbed «the good old man's» peace:

«The rare qualities of Michelangelo led to his being sought by every one. It need surprise no one that I should wish to bring him back to his own country, in which it is but reasonable that he should be allowed to spend his last days in peace and comfort. I have not sought to take him away from Rome, but I have been besought by many to receive him and to make much of him. If he remains in Rome, however it will not bring upon him my displeasure, if on the other hand he returns to his country, it would be inhuman and to be without intellect or judgment, not to welcome him and to bestow on him those honours and benefits due to him.»

From Pisa.

The question of his stay in Rome being settled, Michelangelo arranged for the execution of the model: he first made a small one in clay and supplied this and the requisite drawings to Giovanni Franzese, who completed the admirable wooden model in a year, being the time estimated by Michelangelo. It measures sixteen feet eight inches in height including the drum, cupola, lantern and ball on the top, and twelve feet eight inches in diameter.[1] The two illustrations have been engraved from measured drawings expressly made from the model itself, and therefore they represent accurately the form of Michelangelo's design for the cupola as he intended it to be executed.

[1] The scale specified in the Illustration is erroneous.



ELEVATION OF THE CUPOLA
FROM THE MODEL

PLATE 17.

Scale 1 metre to 200

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

In the exquisite grace of its general proportions in the majestic simplicity and repose of its details, it offers marked contrasts to all Michelangelo's other architectural designs and works, and it shows how great an architect he had become in his old days.

In the presence of his noble theme his tendency to redundancy and eccentricity of part and details vanished, and he rivalled the architect of the Pantheon of Agrippa, whose noble work he imitated, in sublimity of general mass and symmetry of parts.

The encircling wall of the drum of the cupola is strengthened by fourteen buttresses projecting from it, each composed of piers decorated with two pilasters, in front of which are two corresponding columns. The order of architecture selected is the Corinthian, which is treated with breadth and simplicity of design, details being omitted which would not have availed at such a height. The entablature of the drum, breaks into projections over the buttresses, and it is particularly to be noticed, that above each of these, starting from the summit of the blocking course, an abutment sweeps back or batters, with a beautiful curve, dying out in the cornice of the attic, just below the projecting ribs of the cupola. Not only is this admirable in design but it is equally so constructively and in harmony with sound principles. On the summit of each buttress a statue is placed, its weight adding stability, whilst this coronal of Apostles or Saints would have increased the splendour of the design, when executed.

According to Michelangelo's idea the cupola was formed of three vaults over each other. Apparently the inner one was intended to repeat the curves of the Pantheon, whilst the outer one was destined to give height and majesty to the building externally.

In the perfect proportions and beautiful curves of this external dome Michelangelo incomparably excelled his predecessors of every age.

If any surmise may be permitted, founded on observation only, the inner vault was as above stated, a reproduction of that of the Pantheon, the central vault, more pyramidal in form, was constructed to bear the weight of the lantern and approached in form the dome of the Cathedral at Florence by Brunelleschi. In July 1547 he wrote to his nephew Lionardo: « I wish you by means of the concurrence of Messer Giovanfrancesco to take the height of the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore, from the base of the lantern down to the ground, and also the height of the lantern and send it to me. » This is a distinct proof of his study of his great predecessor's work whilst designing his own. Judging by the model he meant the outer dome to be of wood, thus anticipating the construction of Sir Christopher Wren.

With regard to the details of the entire design, their grandeur and simplicity are remarkable, and the lantern certainly is one of the most beautiful creations of the genius of architecture which exists.

When the model is contrasted with the cupola as it has been executed, the following differences in design and structure are notable. In the model the pediments of the windows of the drum are all angular externally and segmental internally. As executed they are both outside and inside alternately angular and segmental. As Michelangelo built the drum, this change must have been made by himself, and therefore the level to which the edifice had been carried in 1557 or in 1558 may be inferred, and the sketch of « St Peters in progress » may be attributed with probability to 1555 or 1556. The beautiful curved buttresses bending back from the blocking course ot the Corinthian piers are altogether omitted, so serious a change as this is not likely to have been the work of Michelangelo, and it may be therefore supposed that he did not build the attic; the effect of the omission is very unfortunate, the curves of the

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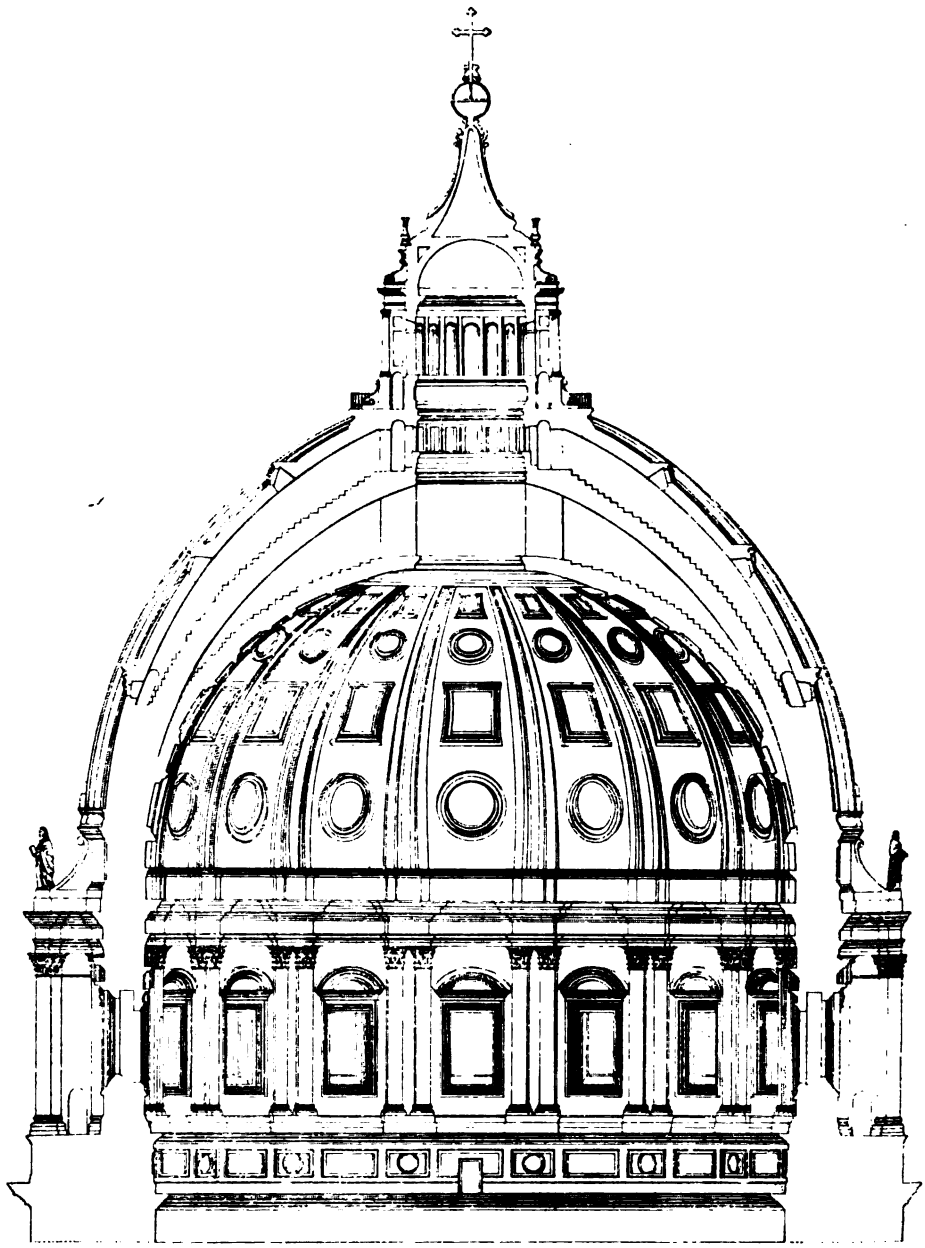
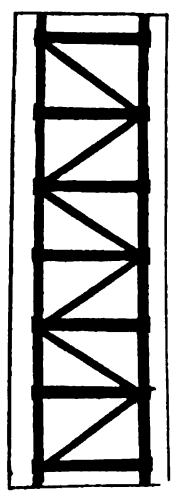


SECTION OF THE MODEL OF THE CUPOLA
OF ST PETERS

PLATE 18.

Scale 1 metre to 200

dome now look stilted,[1] and do not unite happily with the drum, moreover the successors of Michelangelo increased the swell of the curvature of the cupola near its spring, thus adding to the stilted look and seriously impairing the grace of the design. They omitted entirely the inner lower vault, evidently to give height internally, and made the external cupola of brick as well as the internal, and to prevent it expanding had recourse to encircling chains of iron, which bind it at the weakest parts of the curve.



Michelangelo intended to employ iron frames in the masonry of the drum. It is to be presumed he did employ them, for they are shown in the model. The woodcut is a hand sketch from memory of their construction. It may be questioned whether they would really add to the strength of the structure. It is not proposed to follow the history of the building of St Peters under the direction of other architects. Spite of the Briefs of Popes and of every other consideration they all departed from the ideas of Michelangelo as he had done from those of his predecessors. On his part greatly to the advantage of the splendour and majesty of the building, on that of his successors greatly to its detriment.

An important statement of expenditure has been preserved showing the amounts paid from the first of January 1547 to the sixth of September 1571, including Michelangelo's period.

From the 1st of January 1547 to the 8th of May 1551, the sum of 121,554,16 ducats was expended. From the 8th of May 1551 to the 19th of April 1555 — 62,911,84. From the

[1] When an arch springs from its abutments with perpendicular lines before its curvature commences, it is said to be stilted.

19th of April 1555 to the 6th of June 1561 — 105,115,12. From the 6th of June 1561 to the 6th of September 1571 — 147,778,82 ducats.

The Buonarroti Archives contain interesting letters directed by the widowed Queen of Henry the second of France, Catherine de' Medici, to Michelangelo, entreating him to undertake the execution or at least the design of a Monument to her dead husband's memory. The first letter was written soon after his death from an accidental wound received in jousting and was written from.

Blés the xiiij day of November 1559.

« After the deplorable accident to his most Christian and Serene Majesty the king my Lord and Husband, no greater desire remains to me than to commemorate his name, my fervent and true love for him and my present grief. Amongst other projects with this object I have resolved to erect, in the court of my palace, an equestrian statue in bronze of my Lord of such proportions as may suit that place. And as I am aware in common with all the world how excellent a Master you are in art, above all others of this age, whilst you have been attached to my family as is clearly shown by the statues on the monuments of my relatives, I beseech you to accept this undertaking. I am aware that you might to another plead your great age, but I believe that you will not make this apology to me, or at all events that you will make the design and employ the best Masters to be found, to cast and chase it.

No one, I assure you, in the whole world, could do me a greater favour or one for which I should be more grateful.

I write to my cousin Robert at this time, and I say no more, leaving it to him to explain on my part, therefore without more, and praying God to preserve you in happiness. »

CATHERINE.

Robert Strozzi the cousin of Queen Catherine went to Rome and saw Michelangelo, who undertook to make the design, but recommended that Daniello Ricciarelli of Volterra should make the model for casting in bronze. Strozzi, as related by Vasari, soon came to terms with Ricciarelli for the price of the group which was to be of colossal proportions. The Queen again wrote to Michelangelo by Bartolommeo Del Bene to communicate to him her ideas of the character of the statue of the king:

« After Her Majesty the Queen Mother had signed the letter to you this morning she commanded me to inform you, that the head of the statue of the King should be made without curls and as like the portrait as possible; that the armour should be a handsome modern suit, and the horse furnishings also. She has twice insisted by this present, that you should be prayed to make the head as like the said Lord as is possible. As to all the rest she places herself in your hands feeling sure that your perfect judgment and kindness will accomplish all that she ardently desires, to the admiration of present and future times. »

Another letter of the Queen states that she had paid into the hands of Messer Giambattista Gondi six thousand crowns in gold towards the cost of the equestrian statue and her letter thus terminates:

« As there remains nothing more to be done upon my part, I beseech you by the love which you have borne to my house and country, that you will have the goodness to be willing, with such diligence and assiduity as your years permit, that every thing be done in this worthy work, that it shall be recognized as a resemblance to the life, of my Lord, and with all the usual

excellence of your art. Although by it you cannot increase your fame, you may augment the reputation of your prized love towards me and my ancestors and preserve for long the remembrance of my true and only love, for which I shall be your gratefully indebted. »

From Orleans, xxx October 1560.

Your good mistress

CATHERINE.

The earnestness with which the Queen insists upon the likeness shows on her part an apprehension that Michelangelo might idealize her husband as he had her relatives, make the locks curled as in their statues, whereas these Medici had smooth hair, and arm them with Roman or fantastic cuirass and helmet unknown in any armoury of the time. She therefore returns again and again to this subject pressing it on his attention in the most courteous terms, but with the earnest feelings of a loving wife.

Notwithstanding the prayers of the Queen and the efforts of Strozzi, the statue proceeded slowly, it was an error of judgment to place it in the hands of one, now so worn out as Michelangelo was. Daniel of Volterra modelled and cast the colossal horse, but both artists died before the statue of Henry was sculptured. At a later period an effigy of Louis XIII was mounted upon it, the work of the French sculptor Biard and by the directions of Cardinal Richelieu, was erected in the Place Royale.

It was principally as an architect that the advice of Michelangelo was sought in the last years of his active life. The stormy Pontificate of Paul IV terminated in 1559 and he was succeeded by Giovan Angelo Medici with the name of Pius IV. By a motu-proprio he confirmed Michelangelo in his offices and

undoubtedly was his friend and well wisher, which he showed in a welcome way. The annoyances to which he had been subjected by a miserable charlatan Nanni di Baccio Bigio have been already adverted to; this impudent pretender succeded in being appointed by the commissioners to an important office in connection with the works of St Peters in spite of the opposition of Michelangelo. This monstrous appointment was made according to a letter of Tiberio Calcagni addressed to Lionardo Buonarroti in the following manner:

« There is nothing new, except the death of Ceseri overseer of works, who being found by the cook of Monsignor di Forlì, with his wife, was stabbed in thirteen places, and the wife in four; on which account the old man is in trouble, seeing that he wished to confer the place upon Pierluigi Gaeta, which he has not been able to do as the Deputies would not hear of it. »

They appointed Bigio, instead of the person selected by Michelangelo. Who presented himself to the Pope and complained with his usual uncompromising frankness, adding: « Holy Father the Deputies have appointed as my substitute a man whom I do not know; if it appears to them and to your Holiness that I am no longer fit for my position I shall return to Florence where the Duke desires to see me, and I shall end my days in my home, therefore I beg to be permitted to retire. »

The Pope spoke to him graciously and asked him to return when he had seen the Deputies who were summoned to his presence. On being asked to explain, they said that the edifice was going to ruin and that errors were made. His Holiness sent his relative Gabrio Serbelloni to make inquiries with powers to act, and he having ascertained the falsehood of the accusations and traced them to Nanni Bigio, that pretender was publicly

dismissed. Vasari remarks: « Such was the end of Nanni in the fabric of St Peters by which it may be seen that God is the Protector of good men. »

Whilst there can be no doubt of the incapacity and party spirit shown upon the occasion of this appointment, it is sufficiently obvious that Michelangelo was far from conciliatory, was in his consciousness of power, excessively arbitrary, and probably no public body, especially a public body composed of such high dignitaries, could have borne patiently with the treatment which the Roman Deputies, or Board of works, experienced at the hands of Michelangelo.

The following is an official report of their case in relation to the building under their charge, translated as literally as possible from the Latin of that day:

« From the year 1540 when it was seriously and advisedly intended to put (it) in order and commence almost from its foundation, up to the year 1547, when Messer Michelangelo undertook on his own responsibility partly to build up and partly to pull down, 162,624 ducats were expended, but from that time forward the Deputies carried on the work like parrots, knowing nothing, neither what was spent, nor in what manner, but (acting) in accordance with the orders of the said Messer Michelangelo: such being the command of Paul III of happy memory. Now our Holy Lord, up to the present day 136,881. 13 ducats were spent; as may be seen by the books of the Depositaries. But with regard to the building itself whatever it may become, the Deputies cannot be held accountable (can render no account) for every thing is concealed from them as from (persons) unconnected (with the work). This, only for the exoneration of their conscience; they have several times testified and do again testify that they do not approve of the

plan which Messer Michelangelo carries out, above all in respect of his demolitions, for so considerable are the demolitions which have been already made, and which are daily made, that all who behold them feel in the highest degree indignant. However if His Holiness is satisfied so also will his servants the Deputies be perfectly satisfied. »

This is a very strong statement, and it was not altogether that of personal enemies. Cardinal De Carpi, one of the Deputies or Commissioners, was Michelangelo's friend, and honestly believed him mistaken in the course which he was pursuing, and so expressed himself. This reaching Michelangelo he wrote to the Cardinal as follows, and his letter may be taken not only as his expostulation with the Cardinal, but as his defence.

Rome, 13th September 1560.

« Illustrious and Reverend Lord my good Master,

Messer Francesco Bandini informed me yesterday that your most Illustrious and Reverend Lordship had said to him that the building of St Peters could not go worse than it was doing, this has greatly grieved me for you have not been told the truth, nor remembered that I above all men ought to desire that it should go well. I believe, if I do not deceive myself, that at this time I can assure you, that the works could not go better. But as this statement may arise from my personal interest in them and also from my old age, I may easily deceive myself, and so contrary to my intention I may do harm to the building.

I intend as soon as possible to ask the permission of His Holiness our Lord to resign; and now to save time I supplicate your most Illustrious and most Reverend Lordship to set me free from this trouble, in which by the commands of the Popes as

you are aware I have served seventeen years gratis. In which time it has been manifest what has been the nature of my work on the said fabric.

I beseech you to grant me leave as you could not render me a greater service, and with all respect I kiss the hand of your most Illustrious and most Reverend Lordship.

The Humble Servant

Of your Most Illustrious
and Most Reverend Lordship
MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI.

Michelangelo's opinion is very clear. The office of architect was none of his seeking, it had been forced upon him, but at the same time absolute power over the design and fabric of the building had been granted him, and he served without pay of any kind. He was brought into collision with a powerful body of Commissioners most of them of high rank, and he would not conciliate them, he regarded their province as different from his, in his eyes they were to use a modern phrase, a financial Committee only, and he conducted the design and fabric of the building without deigning to consult or even notice them. He reduced them to puppets, or in their own indignant language «parrots.» With his great and acknowledged capacity, and his established reputation it seems probable that a more conciliatory course of conduct upon his part might have carrried the Commissioners with him, which would have been better for his peace as well as for the perfect success of his great work.

In 1558 Michelangelo corresponded with reference to the stair of the Laurentian Library and supplied a model to Ammannati who at the time was the architect, but his plan was for some reason not adopted and the stair as it now exists is the work of Vasari. It is a singular circumstance that up to the present

time this entrance never should have been finished. Respect for the memory of Michelangelo might have induced the Florentines to carry out his design, especially as there is not much now required, for its present state undoubtedly is very discreditable.

Notwithstanding his advanced years and numerous avocations, Michelangelo took an active interest in the Church of St John of the Florentines at Rome, and he corresponded with Duke Cosmo as to the best plan for completing it and furnished five designs of which he himself entertained a high opinion and did not hesitate to express it. The church as it now exists does not represent any of these designs and it is therefore needless to dwell further on the subject.

Pope Pius also employed him to make designs for several of the city gates which he wished to rebuild with greater architectural magnificence. Judging by the ancient gates still remaining, grand, picturesque and interesting erections were pulled down and replaced by others of a pretentious, but for the most part tasteless character, amongst which may be included even those by Michelangelo. The Porta Pia is not a favourable example of his design and is very inferior to the Porta Santo Spirito by Sangallo. It was commenced under Michelangelo's direction in 1560 the contract for the building being preserved in the Archives of the State in Rome, and it was completed in 1565 at a cost of 8518. 36 crowns. The Porta del Popolo is also said to be by Michelangelo, it is a reproduction of the Arch of Titus, the order being changed to the Roman Doric. The profiles are excellent and contrast favourably with his early design.

The grandest work of Michelangelo's old age, St Peters excepted, was the Church of Sta Maria degli Angeli and the Convent built within the circuit of the ruined baths of Diocletian in Rome.

A vast hall with red Egyptian granite monolithic columns existed, but what else of the time of Diocletian, except huge masses of brick wall and arches it would be difficult now to determine.

By looking at these remains of late Roman work, and the ground plan of Michelangelo's design, it will be seen that he availed himself of the largest open spaces within the ruins, and of the granite shafts, the design and arrangement of the modern building being entirely his own. Nothing exists in architecture which excels the plan of this church in beauty and variety of form, including the adjoining light and graceful cloisters and the picturesque dwellings of the Carthusians.

The general proportions are so harmonious, the lines of the plan so gracefully disposed, the form of the whole so original, that without looking at the elevations, the eye is delighted by the evidence on all sides, of the imagination, taste and skill, shown by the venerable architect in this superb work.

The gigantic granite shafts alone are ancient, they are magnificent remains of a period of lamentable decay in architecture, in which however ideas were fixed, which influenced later styles to a remarkable extent. The architrave from column to column was dispensed with and the arch took its place, thus laying the foundation of the prevalent principle in medieval architecture, whilst forms which were developed in this dark age of Roman building, reappeared with superadded grace and infinitely greater skill of execution in the art of the Renaissance.

The interior of this fine church in its present state with superadded ornament of late date is no more to be criticised as Michelangelo's design, than the present interior of St Peters.

The cloister is built in the usual manner, in a style which prevailed amongst Arab as amongst Christian architects, light and unsubstantial columns, bear arches of simple and unadorned

design, which lest they should collapse or cast down their feeble abutments, are bound together with iron rods. A pleasant lightness and even grace are attained, at the cost of truthful and safe principles of construction. Above the cloister is an attic, containing cells in the usual way, in the external design of which Michelangelo has returned to the thoughts of his younger days when he built the Laurentian Library, so entirely is the taste the same.

In the centre of this bright and sunny cloister surrounding a fountain of clear water stand the mighty cypresses which it is said that Michelangelo planted, it is a pleasant and interesting tradition.

The huge gnarled stems, the sombre foliage, the summits pointing to heaven, and the majestic dignity with which these noble trees bend to the passing breeze and rise again in their uprightness, make them fit emblems of Michelangelo.

Pope Pius being desirous of erecting a monument to the memory of his brother Iacopo de' Medici, Marquis of Marignano, consulted Michelangelo who made the design which was executed at Milan and placed in the Cathedral there by Leone Leoni. This eminent sculptor had been famous in the first place as a goldsmith, and as a testimony of his regard for Michelangelo he made a medal of him, with the somewhat singular reverse, a figure of a blind man led by a dog with this inscription:

DOCEBO INIQUOS VIAS TUAS, ET IMPII AD TE CONVERTENTUR

This was suggested by Michelangelo himself, to whom Leone sent four copies of the medal, two in silver and two in bronze accompanied by a letter dated Milan the fourteenth of March 1561 of which the following is an extract:

« Magnificent and much honoured Sir,

I send to your Signory through Signor Carlo Visconti, a distinguished man in this city of Milan and beloved by His Holiness, four medals with your portrait, two of silver and two of bronze. I should have sent them before this time to your Signory but that I have been so much occupied by the work, which through your favour was ordered by His Holiness. I believe that your Signory will pardon the delay.

The medal which is in the case, is chased and finished and I beg that you will keep it for my sake, doing with the others what you please. I have been ambitious enough to send copies to Spain and Flanders and now from motives of regard to Rome. »[1]

Leone then goes on to express his sense of the value of Michelangelo's countenance of him and his hope that through him he may be further employed.

The letters of Michelangelo preserved in the Buonarroti Archives become briefer and briefer and he complains of the difficulty which he experiences in writing. There is one of unusual length written on the twentieth of September 1561 evidently with the intention of doing an act of justice, which in his multifarious occupations had been forgotten. It may be remembered that early in his career he received an advance of money to execute statues for the altar of the Piccolomini at Siena and that he only fulfilled a part of that commission remaining indebted to his employer at least a hundred crowns. He thus writes to:

« Lionardo. I wish thee to seek amongst the papers of Lodovico my father if thou canst find a copy of a contract made on account of certain statues which I promised to finish after

[1] Buonarroti Archives.

the death of Pius the second; which work, on account of certain differences of opinion, remained suspended for some fifty years. Now that I am old I wish to settle that matter, so that after me no claims should unjustly be made upon thee. So far as I recollect the notary who made the contract at the Episcopal residence was called Ser Donato Ciampolli. I have been told that all his papers are in the hands of Ser Lorenzo Violi. If a copy is not found in the house thou mayst apply to the son of Ser Lorenzo, do not spare the necessary expense. »

I MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI.

Then on the thirtieth of November 1561, he again wrote:

« Lionardo. I have had thy letters and one from Antonio Maria Piccolomini and a contract. I cannot say more to thee for the Archbishop of Siena of his grace has agreed to settle this affair, and as he is a good and worthy man I believe that all will go well. I shall inform thee what is concluded. No more. »

I MICHELAGNIOLO BUONARROTI.

It may be assumed that this long outstanding debt was honourably settled. It appears for the first time in Michelangelo's letter that there arose a difference of opinion which prevented the completion of the commission.

One of the last honours publicly paid to Michelangelo was his election in 1563 as Vice-President of the Academy of Fine arts established in Florence by Cosmo, who was himself the first President. The election by its unanimity showed the respect and regard which his brethren in art felt for their aged colleague, and it was accepted by Michelangelo although he was unable to discharge the duties of his office. It was one

more link as it was the last connecting him with that great Tuscan School of art of which he was the acknowledged head.

The last letters in the Buonarroti Archives indicate that the evening of Michelangelo's life passed peacefully, he acknowledges cheerfully and with kindness the usual gifts of Trebbian wine, the vegetables and other comforts forwarded by his nephew. He gave a minute attention to such details especially where they involved sentiments of a pleasing nature or acts of goodness and charity, for instance he did not forget to procure black cloth from Florence to provide Cornelia the wife of Urbino with mourning, he took a deep interest in her affairs. After her husband's loss she lived with her children at Castel Durante, where being wealthy she was sought in marriage. Her letters to Michelangelo show extraordinary ability and he continued to be interested in her fate and that of her children. Having, by her decision of character and high principle, escaped a very bad marriage, which her own father and some others tried to force upon her she at last contracted another, which was satisfactory to herself and her kind protector. She possessed some drawings by Michelangelo which she presented to the Duke of Urbino when she observed how much he wished for them.

Michelangelo was surrounded by devoted friends and pupils, or assistants who regarded him with the strongest affection and respect and his comforts were attended to by trustworthy servants, who however were maligned in Florence in the usual way so that Lionardo was induced to write to his uncle on the subject. The letter of his nephew, finding fault with his domestics, roused the old lion from his repose and he wrote a reply to it full of the fire of other days.

« Lionardo. I see by thy letter that thou givest faith to certain envious and sad fellows who not being able to get me into

their hands and to rob me write lies to thee. They are a set of greedy ones and thou art foolish to lend them thy faith as if I was a baby. Get rid of them as scandal mongers envious and evil livers. With regard to my suffering from bad service, I say to thee that I could not be better served nor more faithfully, and as to being robbed I tell thee that I have in my house people in whom I can peacefully confide. Think of thine own living and not of my affairs for I know how to take care of myself when needful. I am not a baby. May it be well with thee.»

This letter shows that Michelangelo was not neglected as was rumoured in Florence. Duke Cosmo may however have heard these rumours for he directed his Ambassador at the Papal Court to be observant and to see that the great old artist was properly cared for.

Nothing however could surpass the attentions of his intimate friends who frequented his house and listened to his lessons of wisdom and his precepts on art. His strength gradually decayed during the Autumn of 1563 and in the winter following.

The excellence of his constitution must have been extraordinary to resist his painful malady and to bear him as it did through his sufferings, which he endured with such courage. In February his friends became alarmed, and Michelangelo felt that the summons which he had prepared himself for was nigh at hand.

He sent for his friend Daniel da Volterra, who on his way called upon Ascanio Condivi and asked him to visit Michelangelo, suggesting from motives of prudence that he should do so without allowing it to be seen that he was alarmed or that his visit differed in any way from those which he was in the habit of making.

As Daniello entered the room where Michelangelo was, he exclaimed: «Daniello my friend it is all over with me, I entreat you not to leave me.» He then requested him to sit down and to write to his nephew Lionardo. Daniello who was greatly agitated and as he himself said, did not know whether he was ill or well, wrote the letter which Michelangelo signed. This letter was given to Diomede Leoni to be despatched to Florence, and he inclosed it in one from himself giving an account of the state of the illustrious invalid.

Leoni was evidently not altogether without hope although oppressed with apprehension, and from the tone of his letter it may be inferred that he had reason to think that Lionardo was not in robust health and could not ride post, especially at a season when the roads were in bad condition. He wrote as follows:

Rome, 15th February 1564.

« I have been careful to direct to you the inclosed letter written by Messer Daniello Ricciarelli da Volterra and subscribed by Messer Michelangelo your uncle, by which you are informed of his indisposition which began yesterday, and his desire that you come to Rome. I exhort you to come immediately, but with sufficient care not to place yourself in danger from riding post by the bad roads, for you are not accustomed to the violent motion which is also dangerous. You may be careful, for be assured that Messer Tommaso de'Cavalieri, Messer Daniello and I, will not fail in your absence, in every duty for your advantage and honour. Besides Antonio, his old and faithful servant, can give a good account of himself under whatever circumstances it shall please God may occur. Antonio wished to send the letter by a special courier, but as I thought that this might prove very alarming to you, I counselled him not to

do so and persuaded him to send it in this way, which I believe to be as quick and certain as the other. I would again advise you to depart at once that you may be careful of yourself in coming. If the illness of Messere (Michelangelo) is perilous, which God forbid, then you will not find him alive however quick you may be, inasmuch as his illness is caused by his extraordinary age and he cannot last long.... But to give you some account of his state up to the present hour, which is the third of the night, I inform you that a little while ago I left him sitting up with a clear mind, but much overcome with a tendency to somnolence, which to drive away he wished between twenty-two and twenty-three o'clock to attempt to ride, according to his usual custom of an evening, in fine weather. But the cold of the season, and his weakness of head and legs prevented him, so he returned and sat down by the fire which he prefers to being in bed. We all pray God to preserve him yet for some years, and that He also bring you here in safety. I recommend myself to you most cordially and ever.»

Ready to serve you

DIOMEDE LEONI.

The slow fever which consumed Michelangelo did not yield to the skill of his medical attendants Federigo Donato and Gherardo Fidelissimi who were unceasing in their attention, whilst he was also watched over by his Master of the house Antonio who succeeded to Urbino, by Diomede Leoni, Tommaso de'Cavalieri and Daniello da Volterra. He lived on till Friday the twenty-third of February, at first he sat up in his chair near the fire, but the last three days he lay in bed. As he felt death approaching more nearly he expressed a wish that his remains might be conveyed to Florence for burial near his own relatives

and in his own beloved city. On the last day of his life not long before sunset turning to his friends he said « I give my soul to God, my body to the earth, my worldly goods to my nearest relatives, when dying my friends, remember the sufferings of Jesus Christ borne for us, » and so the great and good Michelangelo died in peace at the close of his eighty-ninth year.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

BUONARROTI ARCHIVES

LETTER OF GIOVANNI BALDUCCI FROM ROME TO MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI IN FLORENCE, REGARDING THE TRANSPORT OF THE GROUP IN MARBLE, THE MADONNA AND CHILD AT BRUGES.

iiij day of August 1506.

« Dearest Michelangelo. I am informed that Francesco del Pugliese has the means of sending it to Viareggio and from Viareggio to Flanders. It would be a great satisfaction to me that it should be entrusted to so honest a man. Therefore I advise you, that if Francesco del Pugliese will charge himself to send it to Viareggio and thence to Flanders, employ him. You will arrange as to cost, he is an honest man and all which you do he will hold as well done, I know not how you could do better. When you have settled with him address it to Flanders, that is to Bruges to the heirs of John and Alexander Moscheroni and Company as their property. If Francesco cannot send it to Flanders, then (give it) to Giuliano Adamo to carry out the instructions of the Bonvisi of Lucca. Whatever you expend, ask repayment from Bònifazio Fati and Company, giving due advice. Be patient with the trouble which you have on my account....

Remember that I am ever yours. Christ have you in His keeping. »

Yours

GIOVANNI BALDUCCI
Rome.

Domino Michelagnolo Buonarroti
Florence.

The obsequies of Michelangelo Buonarroti

Lionardo Buonarroti did not reach Rome till after the death of Michelangelo. He found that the body had been conveyed to the church of the Holy Apostles and that there was a general wish that he should be buried there. He was however bent upon fulfilling the wish of Michelangelo to be buried in his own country, which he loved so well, and succeeded in secretly removing the body and in despatching it to Florence in a case as merchandise, to the care of his devoted friend Giorgio Vasari, who received it at the Custom House on the eleventh of March, where the coffin was sealed and was then with much privacy transported to the church of San Pietro Maggiore. The members of the Academy of Art having met, resolved that the body of Michelangelo should be moved with all honour to the church of Santa Croce, where his ancesters were buried, there to await the arrival of his nephew Lionardo.

On Sunday evening all the painters, sculptors and architects in Florence assembled at San Pietro Maggiore, provided with a velvet pall trimmed with gold lace and with a crucifix and a number of torches. The young artists carried the coffin, striving with each other for the honour, whilst their elders bore the flaming torches. The processien of these well known persons soon attracted attention, and the news that the body of Michelangelo had arrived spread over the city, so that thousands of the citizens gathered in the streets through which the cortege must pass.

In Santa Croce the coffin was opened to verify the body, and thus Michelangelo was seen once more by his friends. No decay apparently had commenced; he lay as if asleep.

The Academy with the President Duke Cosmo deliberated as to the ceremonial to be observed. The Duke proposed that it should take place in the church of the Medici, San Lorenzo, and he wrote personally to Messer Benedetto Varchi in the following terms:

« Messer Benedetto our dear friend. The affection with which we regarded the rare genius of Michelagnolo Buonarroti, leads us to wish that his memory should be celebrated and honoured in every way possible, therefore it will gratify us if you, from your regard for us, will undertake the oration to be delivered at his obsequies, according to the ceremonial devised by the Deputies of the Academy, it will be very pleasing to us if it is delivered by you. »

Pisa, 9th March 1564.

The Academy appointed Deputies, or as they would now be called a Committee, charged with the management of the ceremonial to be observed, with full powers to raise money and to call upon artists to assist. Amongst

so many anxious to take a part it must have been difficult to make a selection. — A Catafalque was erected in San Lorenzo fifty-four feet in height and measuring at its base twenty-one feet by seventeen. It was covered with groups of statuary, reliefs and with paintings the subjects for the most part having reference to events in the life of Michelangelo. The invention of the artists did not stop here, the numerons chapels which surround San Lorenzo were each decorated with hangings and for each a picture was painted. The whole of these works of art were executed by excellent artists and their pupils and it is much to be regretted that they have disappeared. On the thirteenth of July, Florence was alive with expectation, the tradesmen spontaneously shut their shops, and crowds gathered in and around the church of San Lorenzo. The Catafalque and High Altar sparkled with the lights of innumerable wax torches, and at the hour fixed for the ceremonial, the Duke, President of the Academy, with his guards and distinguished members of his court, the office bearers and members of the Academy and all the artists then in Florence entered the church and took the seats prepared for them. It must have been a magnificent and soul-stirring spectacle, in that San Lorenzo for which Michelangelo had toiled and suffered for years, to an amount, and at a sacrifice, for which all that was done on that day to honour his memory was not sufficient amends, nor has the religious ceremony, nor the presence of the head of the Medici, nor the sorrow felt for his loss, wiped out the remembrance of the tyranny of that other Medici who forced upon the greatest artist of the age « the ignominy » of those years of unfitting labour in the marble mountains.

With all the pomp and ceremonial of the Church of which Michelangelo was a faithful adherent, to the sound of appropriate music, the funeral Mass was sung. The Prior of San Lorenzo with the other Clergy attached to the church being all present. The Mass concluded, Benedetto Varchi ascended the brazen pulpit to the left of the nave, — a work of Donatello — and in his clear and beautiful voice, and with his gracious manner, pronounced an eulogium on the mighty dead.

Thus were celebrated the obsequies of the sculptor, painter and architect, Michelangelo Buonarroti de'Simoni, who sleeps in the church of Santa Croce next to the altar of the Cavalcante, surrounded on all sides by other famous Tuscans, he being one of the greatest of these immortals.

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LETTER OF DANIELLO RICCIARELLI DA VOLTERRA TO GIORGIO VASARI

Rome, 17th March 1564.

Illustrious and dear Sir,

I received your, to me, most gratifying letter, especially so, at a time when I am in so much grief, having lost such counsel and sweet companionship. I knew that I should grieve for the death of such a master and father; although the evil was foreseen I did not realize how great it would be. You ask me to give you an account of the things of his which have been found. What a mistake you made in not accepting that Christ parting from his Mother, when he was willing to give it to you: anyhow he never made another, so far as I have observed, and you will know why. When he became ill, which was the Monday of carnival, he sent for me, such being his habit whenever he felt unwell, and I let Messer Federigo di Carpi (Ascanio Condivi) know and he came at once pretending that it was by chance. When he saw me he said « Oh Daniello it is over with me, I beseech you do not leave me. » He made me write to Messer Lionardo his nephew that he might come, and he told me that I must wait for him in the house and on no account to leave. So I have acted, although I felt myself more ill than well. His illness lasted five days, on two he sat up by the fire, for three he lay in bed, he expired on Friday evening, as we may certainly believe in peace with God. On Saturday morning whilst we arranged the coffin and other things, the Judge and Notary came from the Governor on the part of the Pope, who wished to have the inventory of what there was, this could not be refused, so it was written. Four cartoons were found, one the above, another that which Ascanio painted if you remember it, another an Apostle which he intended to be done in marble, and a Pietà which he had commenced, but of which the attitudes only of the figures are observable, it is so slightly drawn. That of the Christ is the best; but now they are all gone where it will be difficult even to see them, far more to recover them. However I have reminded Cardinal Morone that it[1] was commenced at my request and I offered to make him a copy if I could have it.

Certain little drawings which you may call to remembrance and the Christ praying in the garden, he had given to his man Iacopo, the companion of Michele if you remember him, but his nephew will take them from him to give to the Duke.

[1] It is not clear to which of the cartoons reference is here made.

There were no other drawings. Three statues just begun were found; one of them being St Peter in papal robes, another a Pietà in the arms of Our Lady and the third a Christ holding his cross like the one in the Minerva but smaller and differing from it.[1] The nephew arrived three days after his death and immediately gave orders that the body should be transported to Florence, as he (Michelangelo) had frequently desired when he was well, and also two days before he died. Thereafter he went to the Governor to recover the cartoons, and a case in which were ten [illegible] and ducats together with about one hundred ducats in small change; which had been duly counted on Saturday when the inventory was made before the body was carried to the church of the Holy Apostles. The box was at once given to him with all the money which was sealed, but the cartoons were not given up, and when he asked for them he was told that it was enough to have given him the money; what will be the end is not known. My letter becomes too long I think, for once I have emptied a pitcherfull. Next time I shall write to Michele. Communicate this to Messer Giovanbatista Tassi, who did he not know me so well, would believe that I had forgotten him, it is so long since I wrote to him. But I hope to be pardoned, it is a labour to me to write as it is to do everything else.

Your most affectionate servant

DANIELLO RICCIARELLI.

LETTER OF CONDOLENCE FROM MESSER GIORGIO VASARI TO LIONARDO BUONARROTI

Illustrious Messer Lionardo

I have heard of the death of Messer Michelangelo with great sorrow, who was a father to me by love as an uncle to you by blood. Still more it grieved me that you did not arrive in time to find him yet living. I am certain that as the Almighty had bestowed him upon this age as a miracle of rare genius, he has now placed him at his feet, so holy was his character, that, as by the work of his hands he adorned this world, so his soul may now adorn Paradise. Various particulars of his testament have come here, and although I believe that he who writes says the truth, yet till I hear something from yourself, I am neither happy nor depressed by what I have heard.

[1] Not improbably the statue which he commenced for Metello Varj see p. 263. It was like Michelangelo to increase the size and vary the composition in making a second, and his friend expressed himself very warmly with regard to his generosity of conduct.

I would say to you that after your departure, I sent to your house to the Lady Cassandra to offer her every service in my power, and she, who is so courteous and kind to your friends and those of Michelangelo, sent me the letter describing his death and the honours paid to him in Rome, and stating that he was deposited in the church of the Holy Apostles, to be thence taken to Florence, a circumstance which has comforted the minds of all who are afflicted by his loss. If Florence could not enjoy his presence when alive, she may possess his body and preserve his memory to her honour, and keep alive the fame of his noble house made more illustrious, by the rare gifts which were his. I have to inform you that our illustrious Prince is very desirous that the body should come or even the bones, and we hear from his Highness who writes from Pisa that he will not fail to place his statue in Santa Maria del Fiore. It would not appear to me inappropriate, Messer Lionardo, if your return is delayed, that you should write a letter to his Highness, bewailing the loss which this city and his Highness have suffered by this death, and that you lament that he has not left drawings or cartoons or models, as I have observed that you write, for you would have presented a part to his Highness. But since he is departed and having left no heir but you, you will be the same as your uncle in loyalty and service, and as now there are only the things which are in Via Mozza,[1] that these shall be his, if it so please him, beseeching him at the same time to extend the same protection to you now, as he did to Michelangelo, who has passed to another life. It will be of great benefit to you thus to address him. If you will send your letter to me I will accompany it with one from myself and will do for you, that which you know I have always done, for the love which was divided between you and Michelangelo is now all yours. I have now to inform you that our Academy of Art has given orders to honour him with magnificent obsequies in San Lorenzo after Easter, with much pomp and with statues and appropriate ornaments, and they have instructed Varchi to pronounce an oration by desire of his Highness the President. Four members have been set over this with powers to call upon all corporations for work and money. One is Benvenuto another Ammannato, sculptors, the other two are painters, that is Bronzino and your friend Giorgio Vasari. Every one will be anxious to do you honour, Michelangelo now having no need of it, for all his he has taken with him. It would be dear to me to receive some information from you and that you should make some notes recalling facts from 1550 till now, especially about St Peters, so that I may some months hence reprint my lives of the painters and sculptors and thus I may do honour to the close of his life. Arrange that you may be able to lay your hands on the sonnets, songs and other compositions of his, also on letters from

[1] In Michelangelo's house and workshop there.

Princes and great men so as the more to honour him. So much I advise. It will be a great concession and grace on your part if I may receive from you any sketch of his however slight; besides bearing his memory in my heart this would be a remembrance of him and of your regard and would be more dear to me than the gift of a city. Not to detain you longer I end thus, that I am altogether as much yours as you could desire and you may command me.

Your Signóry's most affectionate friend

GIORGIO VASARI.

BUONARROTI ARCHIVES

GIORGIO VASARI TO LIONARDO BUONARROTI

Florence, March 1564.

Illustrious Messer Lionardo

Since I wrote to you eight days ago, I have the honour to receive yours and with it the body of that most holy old man who was the light of our arts. Had you sent to this city a great treasure it could not have been a greater gift than this relic of one so celebrated and so honoured. Messer Lionardo, it will be carried on the shoulders of all the Academicians from where it is to Santa Croce, and the burial will take place when you give orders.

I have not allowed it to be taken out of the case or touched, I have caused it to be sealed at the custom house till your arrival, and I have given notice of everything to his Highness, in the mean time I await your letter which I requested of you, to enable me to write more distinctly for your advantage. I am certain that his Highness loves you and will confer benefits upon you.

To make a monument for him is an idea which pleases me, and as Messer Daniello writes to me about the statues and marbles in Via Mozza, I have informed his Highness of every thing, and if Messer Daniello makes you a design I hope that it will not seem too much trouble to make one including the figure at Via Mozza and another without it. For my part I cannot guess what use he may wish to make of it. I shall not fail to reply to the letter of Messer Daniello, to whom pray commend me. Above all remember to inform me well of the affairs of St Peter's from the year fifty to this time, that I may add to the life, as I wrote to you, that which is needful in defence against the many evil....

Signed GIORGIO VASARI.

The monument of Michelangelo existing in Santa Croce, Florence, was designed by Vasari and erected at the joint expense of Duke Cosmo and Lionardo Buonarroti. The Duke supplying the marble and Lionardo defraying the other expenses. On the monument are three figures of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. The first with the bust of Michelangelo was executed by Battista Lorenzi, the second by Giovanni Bandini, the third by Valerio Cioli. This monument was completed in four years, there being a record of the payments made for it dated the 20th of July 1568.

In Rome also a monument was erected in honour of Michelangelo, in the cloister of the convent connected with the Church of the Holy Apostles. He is represented in a recumbent position and in his working dress. The following epitaph of later date has been placed upon it.

MICHÆL ANGELUS
BONARROTIUS
SCULPTOR PICTOR ARCHITECTUS
MAXIMA ARTIFICIUM FREQUENTIA
IN HAC BASILICA SS. XII APOST. F. M. C.
XI CAL MART. A MDLXIV ELATUS EST
CLAM INDE FLORENTIAM TRANSLATUS
ET IN TEMPLO S. CRUCIS EORUMD. F.
V. ID MART EJUSD A CONDITUS
TANTO NOMINI
NULLUM PAR ELOGIUM

At one time it was disputed that this was in reality a monument to the memory of Michelangelo. In the Buonarroti Archives some letters are preserved written by Diomede Leoni to Lionardo Buonarroti to consult him as to the inscription for a monument the last of which indicates that it was either in the course of erection or completed.

BUONARROTI ARCHIVES

Rome, 14th August 1568.

« I have long delayed writing to you as to the epitaph for the happy memory of your uncle, for it is desirable to consult the invention of several, for everyone wishes something to be done. Do not be surprised

if I have delayed till this time to send you the first which is by a learned and judicious person. It may rather appear to be long, but you are aware that little can be said if it be too brief. I have distributed the letters on the sheet as they will be cut on the stone.... By the next despatch I shall send you two others written by different persons, and it will be a pleasure to me to learn which satisfies you. »

Portraits in Bronze of Michelangelo

Daniel da Volterra modelled two busts of Michelangelo to be cast in bronze, intended for Lionardo Buonarroti to whom Diomede Leoni and Iacopo del Duca wrote during the progress of the works. It appears also by a letter of Diomede to Lionardo written in 1565 that he also had modelled a portrait.

BUONARROTI ARCHIVES

« I remind you (Daniello) of your two busts, you will find mine nearly finished, which will make you wish to clean (chase) yours as soon as possible. »

Diomede Leoni.

Daniello had the models cast in bronze and the above letter shows that he had not worked upon them in the metal. He died before doing so.

BUONARROTI ARCHIVES

Letter of 18th April 1566.

« With regard to the metal busts, Messer Daniello has cast them, but they are in such a state that they must be worked over with chisels and files, and I do not know if your Signory will like them. Do as you please. For my part I wish you had a good memorial of him and nothing less. That which I say, I do so from regard, had Daniello been alive perhaps he would have known how to finish them, as to these people I do not know what they will do. »

Diomede Leoni.

BUONARROTI ARCHIVES

At the same time Michele Alberti wrote:

Rome, 17th April 1566.

Messer Jacomo,

Your friend has informed me that your Signory wishes to know in what state are the bronze busts of Michelangelo, peace be to his memory. They are cast and may be chased in a month or little more, when your Signory may have them. If you wish, you will be served faithfully and well. Ever at your service.

MICHELE ALBERTI.

Another portrait also in bronze was modelled by Antonio del Franzese, servant of Michelangelo, which, with a small copy of the statue of Moses, he presented to the Duke of Urbino.

When the Medici inherited the property of the Duke of Urbino the copy of the statue of Moses and the bronze bust came to Florence and are now preserved in the National Museum.

ARCHIVES OF THE STATE, ROME

An inventory is preserved referred to in the letter of Daniello da Volterra, (see ante) which was made immediately after the death of Michelangelo. It contains a list of his houshold goods and clothes and besides these of the works of art which were found, which are thus described.

« In a lower room covered with a roof:

A statue commenced representing St Peter, blocked out and not finished.

Another statue commenced representing Christ and another figure with it in one piece, blocked out and not finished.

Another small statue of Christ with the cross on his shoulder not finished.

In the room of the said Messer Michelangelo.

Item a cartoon of two pieces of paper glued together on which is drawn the plan of the fabric of St Peter's.

Another little cartoon on which is drawn the front of a palace.

Another cartoon on which is drawn a window of St Peter's.

Another cartoon of pieces glued together on which is drawn the old plan of the said church of St Peter said to be according to the model of Sangallo.

Another cartoon with three sketches of little figures (imperfect).

Another cartoon with drawing of a window and others.

A large cartoon, on which is drawn a Pietà with nine figures unfinished.

Another large cartoon on which are drawn three large figures and two children.

Another large cartoon on which is drawn a large figure alone.

Another large cartoon on which are drawn and sketched the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ and that of the glorious Virgin Mary, His Mother.

A box of walnut wood was also found in his room, sealed in the first place at two different places on bands of paper, that is with five long pieces of paper sealed at each end. These being removed the case was found to contain:

In a small white earthenware vase in small coin.....	Crowns	104 20
Item in a similar smaller vase sixty-nine Julii		6 90
Item in a green canvas purse, within a handkerchief, two hundred and twenty-four ducats in gold.....		224 00
Item in another handkerchief between ducats and Spanish doubloons.....		119 00
Item in a small bag of white canvas Hungarian and German coins.....		200 00
Item in a handkerchief, Venetian ducats		126 00
Item in a handkerchief, ducats in gold of various coinages...		208 00
Item in the above described green bag, ducats in gold.....		2117 00
Item in a copper vase ducats in gold of various coinages.....		264 00
Item crowns in gold, Sardinian.....		194 00
Item in a broken copper vase with a handle, in the manner of a bottle, ducats in gold.....		746 00
Item in the bottom of the box, 16 pauls.....		1 60
Item wrapped in paper in a white vase as above, crowns in gold, with a memorial of one hundred crowns on account of the Sienese.....		97 00
Item in another copper vase, ducats in gold various coinages.		3994 00

Opening and examination of the Sarcophagus under the statue of Lorenzo by Michelangelo, in the Medici Chapel San Lorenzo

On the first of March 1875 the sarcophagus on the northside of the chapel of the Medici on the lid of which sit the statues of Dawn and Twilight, was opened after the two statues had, on a previous day, been raised up and carefully secured on wooden beams.

On the lid being moved to one side, it was seen that the sarcophagus was covered with narrow boards, which were not fastened in any way and were easily lifted,[1] discovering two bodies, one headless and dressed in black, the tunic being bordered with white lace; the other with its head towards the altar and its feet under the shoulders of the body in black, was clad in a white linen tunic trimmed with white lace, the drawers also being white. On the skull of this body, which lay on a white pillow, there was a shallow velvet cap, of a brown colour. The cranium still bore short, curly, reddish locks and the teeth were pure white and perfect. The body in black was apparently headless, but an examination being made under the tunic, the head was found, a few teeth had fallen out, the rest were large, pure white and perfect.

Both bodies had been embalmed, but the flesh was gone, and the dresses had shrunk into long thin folds, as the muscles had decayed, the stuff had dried so as to

[1] « As I lifted the end next me of these boards, I believe that the workman at the other end and I were the first to see the bodies as they lay, and I can therefore answer for the accuracy of the sketch, I also pointed out that the head of Lorenzo was under his tunic. It was entirely accidental that I was so placed as to assist as I have described. On a previous occasion when a tomb was opened a workman died, it was said of inhaling arsenic, consequently there was an unwillingness to be the first to uncover the sarcophagus. The only workman who assisted bound up his mouth and nostrils. »

resemble brittle paper. The bones were generally of an asphaltic brown, but black in some parts and the natural colour in others; they shone as if varnished. The gums which had been used lay about in fragments shining like pieces of broken glass.

From the position of the bodies it would appear that the one in black had been raised to deposit the other in white, when the head of the first had fallen off, and been hastily thrust, where it was found, under the breast of the tunic.

Two strong iron pins had been inserted in the bottom of the sarcophagus with cement, no doubt intended to hold fast the first wooden lid. One of these pins had rusted to such an extent that it had fallen down, the other stood in its place and had necessitated the twisted position of the body in white, and the placing of its head in the corner of the sarcophagus as seen in the sketch.

It was thought necessary by the officials present to examine the skulls, but besides removing these, the bodies were in about a quarter of an hour torn to fragments, the lace taken from the dresses appropriated by bystanders and even teeth carried away. The identity of the bodies was destroyed, before any careful or satisfactory examination was made. After having been laid on the wooden seats of the chapel they were flung back into the sarcophagus by the workmen, a confused pile of bones.

The body in black thus scornfully treated was that of Lorenzo Duke of Urbino, who died in 1519. The sarcophagus in which his remains were found was not completed by Michelangelo till 1534 after which, it is probable that it was deposited but the statues of Dawn and Twilight were not placed on the lid. The body in white was that of his reputed son Alexander the first, Duke of Florence. He was assassinated on the sixth of January 1536 and carried to San Lorenzo in a coffin covered with gold brocade, which after the usual religious ceremonies, was placed in the sacristy with the banners used in the procession in his honour; for however debauched and tyrannical, he was popular with the lower orders.

« On the thirteenth of March 1536 he was taken from his wooden coffin and with renewed pomp, deposited in the sepulchre of his father made by Michelangelo » (See the Medici Chapels described by Domenico Moreni, page 93).

Vasari in his autobiography, included in his great work, makes the following statement:

« Having returned to my usual studies I had an opportunity by means of the said gentleman (M. Ottaviano de'Medici) to enter the new sacristy of San Lorenzo, when I chose, where are the works of Michelangelo, he at that time having gone to Rome, and thus I studied them for some time with great diligence, especially as they were on the ground. » This was in Duke Alexander's reign after 1534. Michelangelo then on leaving Flo-

rence after the death of Clement had not placed the statues on the sarcophagi where they now are. Domenico Moreni in his detailed history of the sacristy does not say when the bodies of Giuliano and Lorenzo were finally deposited in the sepulchres designed by Michelangelo. This apparently was done by order of Alexander. The statues of Dawn and Twilight must have been placed where they now are after his death, which is further indicated by another statement of Vasari in the life of Tribolo, that he moved Duke Alexander to invite Michelangelo to return to Florence to finish his work on the monuments. This shows that just before the assassination of the Duke the statues were still awaiting the sculptors last touches. They were probably placed on the sarcophagi by the orders of Duke Cosmo when hopeless of Michelangelo's return from Rome. When this was done the statue of Twilight had a piece of wood placed under it which was allowed to remain and had decayed when it was this year observed by one of the custodi that the statue was slipping from its seat. Both statues were lifted and it was seen that they were placed on marble tenons a foot square and two inches deep. They were removed from a desire to fasten them firmly with copper pins, and the opportunity was taken to ascertain the contents of the sarcophagus.

According to a statement published by one of the medical Professors, who presided over the dismemberment of the bodies, the skull of Lorenzo indicated that he had been a man of great muscular development and strength. There was nothing, it is stated, in the formation of the skull of Alexander to indicate that he was in any way related to Lorenzo. A circular opening or hole in the head of Lorenzo, was referred to a passage in Guicciardini's History, which relates that Lorenzo at the siege of Mondolfo observing a musketeer about to fire at him, to avoid the shot, flung himself on the ground, thus saving his life, but he was wounded by the bullet which struck him on the summit of the head and came out at the neck. A hole in the skull described as being round resulted from this shot. In the skull of Alexander there is also a remarkable piece of evidence, that is the distinct mark of the stab in the face which he received from his assassin Lorenzino, it penetrated the bone to the left of the nose. I have refrained from offering any remarks on the treatment of these remains of the dead, but I regret since they were so treated, that in compensation, no intelligent examination was made of them beyond that of the skulls.

MONUMENT

OF GIAN GIACOMO AND GABRIELE MEDICI

MILAN CATHEDRAL

Since completing this work the author has had an opportunity of examining the monument of Gian Giacomo Medici of Melignano alluded to in the twenty-first chapter at page 543 as having been designed by Michelangelo and executed by Leone Leoni in the Cathedral of Milan. It has obviously been carried out from one of Michelangelo's hand sketches not drawn to scale, by an artist by no means conversant with architectural details. Thus in the mass it has an imposing character, whilst in all its details it is very imperfect. It is apparent that Leone Leoni knew nothing of architecture and was quite unable to translate the sketch, with which he was provided, into a good working design. A colossal statue of Gian Giacomo in ancient Roman armour occupies the centre of the lower stage of the monument in a square-headed niche with a column on each side. He was lame having a short leg, and contrary to all good canons of art this lameness has been shown in a heroic statue. It is to be presumed that had he squinted this also would have been carefully indicated. On each side of him likewise in square-headed niches, in the manner so common in Michelangelo's design, sit on poorly designed pedestals, bronze statues representing Military Virtue and Peace. They are both smaller than Gian Giacomo. Above them are reliefs also in bronze. Statues of Prudence and Fame stand at each end of the cornice. In the attic is a relief, also of bronze, representing the birth of Christ.

Leone Leoni was a better sculptor than he was an architect. The statues partially recall the manner of Michelangelo, but not so as to impair the claims of Leoni to original powers. Like Benvenuto Cellini bred a goldsmith, his works show the same tendency to minute detail and high finish. Bronze candelabra and armorials complete the decorations.

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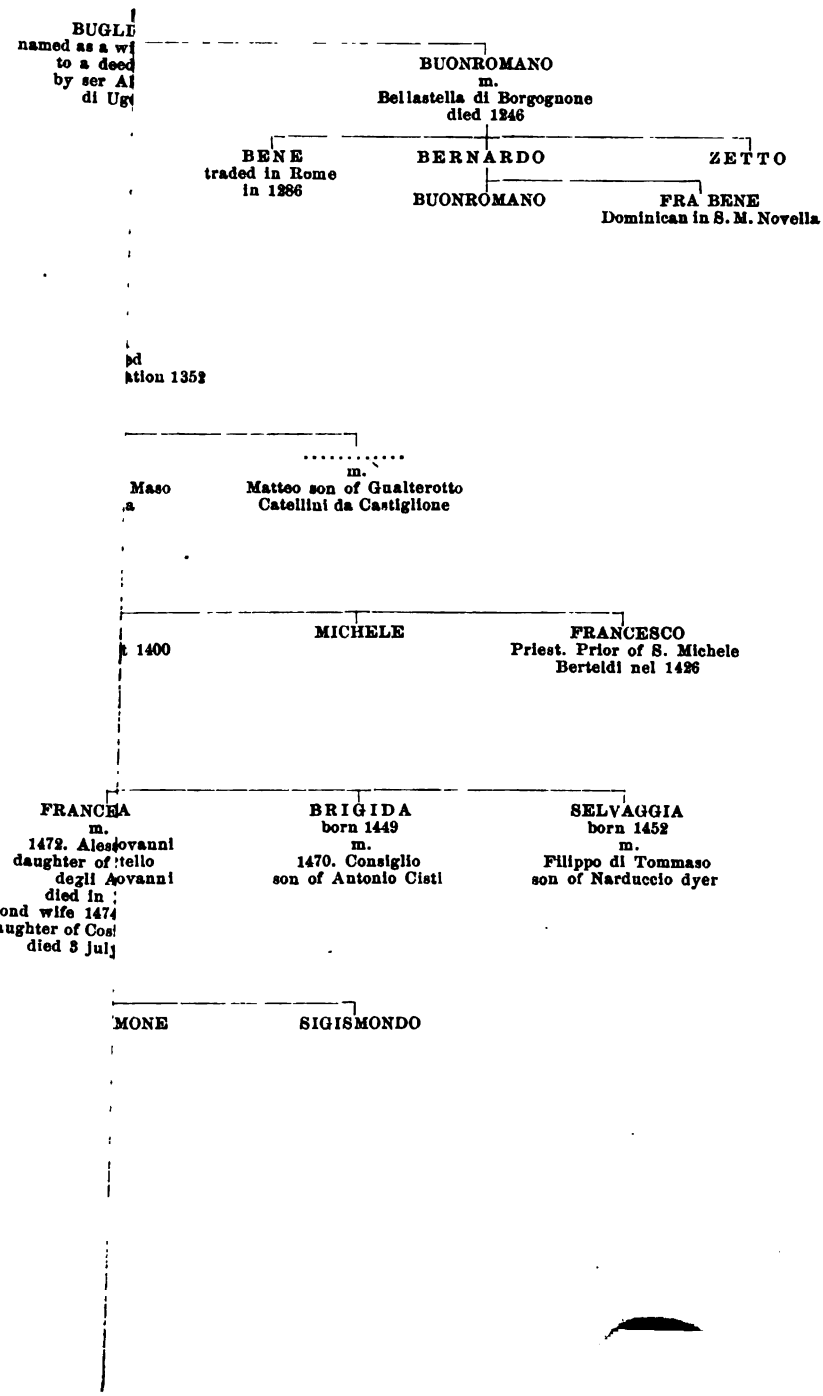
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daughter of Cos
died 3 July
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born 1449
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1470. Consiglio
son of Antonio Cisti
SELVAGGIA
born 1452
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Filippo di Tommaso
son of Narduccio dyer
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